

No. 70 • SCIENCE FICTION • HORROR • FANTASY • ANIMATION • SPFX • 95p

STARBURST

THE DEAD ZONE

WE INTERVIEW

DIRECTOR

JOE DANTE

SCRIPT-WRITER

JOHN SAYLES

AND

DAVID CRONENBERG

ON THE LATEST ADAPTATION
OF A **STEPHEN KING** NOVEL



SWORD OF THE VALIANT
PREVIEWED INSIDE

Opinion

The Gross-Out Factor

Sometimes a film, or any form of cultural entertainment, can be in such generally accepted bad taste, so absolutely gross in nature, that the subject matter cannot be taken seriously. In some cases this factor is not necessarily a disadvantage; in fact it can create a whole new dimension of entertainment. Bad taste never hurt anyone. The worst it can do is offend!

Bad taste. American underground filmmaker, and self-proclaimed "Prince of Puke" John Waters (cult director of the infamous *Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*, *Polyester*, etc.), explains in his autobiography (aptly titled *Shock Value*) that there are two kinds of bad taste. There is "good" bad taste and there is "bad" bad taste. What "good" bad taste usually has over "bad" bad taste is a sense of humour. This applies to his wonderful "alternative" sex comedies and also, as we at Starburst are more concerned with, to many horror films.

The trend of popular horror films over the last few years has given way to the graphic depiction of scenes of human mutilation and carnage (you know the kind: *Don't Go in the House by the Cemetery if You're Alone in the Dark at Halloween 3D*) presenting gory bad taste in buckets. The most effective of these (usually cheap) "slash 'n' hack" movies succeed in entertaining, without just being repulsive, by also having a healthy sense of fun to counterbalance the gruesome proceedings. Sam Raimi's highly acclaimed horror film, *The Evil Dead*, and Lucio Fulci's Italian zombie movies work in this way.



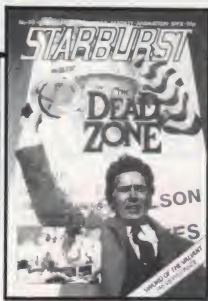
Unfortunately it seems not everyone can appreciate the harmless joys of gory horror presented in a tongue-in-cheek manner. Recently the "Guardians of our society" in the government who are campaigning (and winning, it seems) against so-called "video nasties" have displayed a total lack of discretion by throwing every remotely suspect film into one basket (case). Often it would appear they base their damning opinions on certain films purely on the basis of its title (hence the incredible story of video copies of *Apocalypse Now* being seized somewhere because it had a similar title to *Cannibal Apocalypse*!). It is ridiculous that they are trying to ban such light-hearted entertainment as *The Evil Dead* for instance. As Starburst reader Robert Parkinson of Peterborough points out, "*The Evil Dead* is certainly quite nasty but it is a very good horror film and very well made compared to the true 'video nasties' like abysmal horror attempts such as *I Spit on Your Grave* and *Driller Killer*." He goes on to rightfully describe *The Evil Dead* as "Marvellous gory fun."

In their desired effort to thrill, fantasy films, particularly those of the "horror" variety, set out to astound the viewer. That is why films such as *The Evil Dead* are successful. They can be so gross in concept that no rational human being could ever be "affected" by them. It is that all-important "gross-out factor" when such over-the-top images are depicted it becomes funny. This is just harmless fun, and is the whole essence of fantasy films.

There are some truly "nasty" and potentially harmful forms of real "bad" bad taste being passed off as entertainment. A recent example of this is Clint Eastwood's latest *Dirty Harry* film, *Sudden Impact*, which contains many disturbing scenes of excessive sadism.

Surely this tells us something. Just why is it that The Authorities are ignoring films which contain scenes of perverted violence distributed by large respectable companies and then wading in, all guns blazing, on the smaller budgeted horror movies handled by the smaller independent companies? Perhaps the massive advertising campaign given to films such as *Sudden Impact* somehow bestows upon it a kind of general acceptability. Whereas less commercially hyped films such as *The Evil Dead* are the kind that are strangely deemed "dangerous to society" in some way.

In reality, few of us would miss most of the garbage that would fall casualty to the Video Bill. Pity about films like *The Evil Dead* though. For these are the sort of humorous "good" bad taste films that give a lot of healthy entertainment, producing more laughter than psychosis.



Volume 6, Number 10
June 1984 issue

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For display advertising contact Sally Benson at the editorial address. Telephone: 01-221 1232. Printed in the United Kingdom.

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UNCHARTED

Whatever happened to Tony Crawley's annual fantasy film charts? Only recently I was flicking through **Starburst 45** when I came across them. Excellent! Let's see more of them.

Another aspect of this fine magazine I would like to congratulate you on is the occasional special feature you do. However, way, way back in **Starburst 44** you were talking about a Horror Classic piece on that great film *The Exorcist*. I don't remember seeing it. Maybe I missed it.

I would love to see a special horror issue. I know you have previously carried a special Werewolf and indeed a special horror issue in the past. An up-to-date one would be greatly enjoyed by this reader.

Keep up the smashing work.

Tony Skillington
Cork
Ireland

Tony Crawley's latest update of his annual fantasy film chart is scheduled to appear next month in **Starburst 71**. Also, fear not, Tony, the promised feature on *The Exorcist* is currently in the works for a future issue.

MORE CLASSIC SF

Just writing to tell you how much I enjoyed issue 67, The Best of British Television Fantasy. I am a proud owner of a complete **Starburst** collection, and issue 67 was one of the most enjoyable reads yet!

Some of my favourite articles you've run include those on "Classic" SF films – such as *War of the Worlds*, *The Thing* etc. – and the old "Gothic" horror films, especially the poster reproductions. I loved your Werewolf issue!

More please, if at all possible!

I also like the book and record reviews you occasionally run and the *It's Only a Movie* column.

I would like to thank the **Starburst** crew who attended the Westminster Comic Mart last February 4th for an interesting and informative afternoon. I hope you do another one!

To finish I'd just like to say that I think Colin Baker's new *Doctor Who* outfit is awful. What happened to the Hartnell/Pertwee dignity? Just imagine it – five Doctors rolling in their dimensionally transcendental graves!

Ashley Davies
Sanderstead
Surrey

KUBRICK'S KLASSIC

As it appears no-one is going to say anything good about Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* how about this...

The main criticism against it appears to be its lack of relationship with King's novel. Well, I remember reading in an issue of **Starburst** one gent say that you don't do a novel a favour by being faithful to it, but by producing something which is valid as a film; and *The Shining* is most definitely valid in that context. Certain sequences are abso-

Starburst LETTERS

Send all your comments and criticisms to:
**Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd., 23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA, United Kingdom.**



Above: Jack Nicholson is comforted after seeing Colin Baker's new *Doctor Who* costume (Top).

lutely stunning, and although Jack Nicholson's performance is weird it was obviously demanded by Kubrick. Among the swelter of stalk 'n' slash garbage around at the moment, it – dare I say it – positively shines.

If you really want to see a Stephen King novel turned into a lousy movie, try *Cujo*, and to quote John Brosnan: "Boy, is that one a depressing experience."

Nicholas Hill
Nunthorpe
Cleveland

CARPENTER'S CAR

Halfway through John Carpenter's *Christine* I had already concluded that the car was a perfect representation of the film – a flashy piece of junk.

Whereas Carpenter has only half-realized the strengths of the novel (the relationships between Dennis and Arnie, Leigh and Christine), he has managed to extend the weaknesses (the actual depiction of the murders, the predictable "twist" ending).

The statement from **Starburst 67** "Carpenter managed something that defeated Hitchcock in having Christine kill a mechanic while on the factory line" left me puzzled. What I saw was an opening scene ruined by self-indulgence. Had Carpenter removed all reference to the mechanic's dismemberment, the scene may have worked. On a better day, Carpenter would have realized that the dismemberment only served to undermine the impact of the foreman's death inside Christine.

But no, in sheer ignorance, Carpenter repeats the mistake at the end of the film. Although here, it might have worked had it been shot differently.

Most of the key scenes left the audience unaffected. This was especially true of Darnell's demise. Here, the slow pace of the editing, the lack of moody Carpenter music, and the poor performance of the actor mitigated from what should have been an effective scene. Audience identification with Darnell was there – well established through humour.

Most of the faults, however, can probably be traced back to the script which was, in a couple of words: first draft. Having George, instead of Roland Lebay sell Christine was not only pointless, but made nonsense out of Arnie's mental transformation into Roland Lebay. Ironically, this transformation is the highlight of the film due to Keith Gordon's performance (the best scene being Dennis and Arnie/Lebay's nocturnal tour of the highway).

This letter may be pedantic and angry, but I was disgusted and disappointed with John Carpenter's *Christine*. It is predictable and mediocre, and we have a right to deserve more than that from John Carpenter.

Jon Towlson
Grantham
Lincolnshire



MISSING THEME

Just a short addendum to Mat Irvine's review of the *Sound Waves* LP, in which he states that there has been no other cover version of the Vangelis theme from *Missing*. In fact, a version by the Shadows was released in July 1982 (Polydor POSP 485, with a picture sleeve based on the film poster) and the track also appeared on their album *Life in the Jungle* (Polydor 2478 163, released later the same year). While naturally featuring guitar rather than synthesiser, though with plenty of concerto-style piano from Cliff Hall, it is an interesting version, particularly in the light of Mat's comments about the lack of versions of this particular item.

Thanks for a consistently enjoyable magazine.

George Geddes
Broomhill
Glasgow

TELE-FANTASY

Many thanks for issue 67 of *Starburst*. The Best of British Television Fantasy.

The Patrick Macnee interview was excellent. Unfortunately the episode checklist omitted his appearances in *The New Avengers* (though mentioned in the interview). Admittedly, *The New Avengers* weren't quite so good, although the first series was still good British fantasy. *The New Avengers* were ruined by French and Canadian influence – necessary because they had the finance.

The Diana Rigg feature was great. Personally, I consider her to be the best *Avenger* girl of the lot (with Joanna Lumley running a close second).

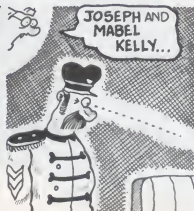
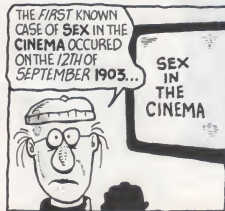
Thanks for an enjoyable and very informative magazine.

Andrew Twitchett
Rochester
Kent



Left: Two scenes from *The New Avengers*, featuring Gareth Hunt (recently seen making an ass of himself with Kenny Everett in the embarrassing travesty, *Bloodbath at the House of Death*), Joanna Lumley as Purdy and, of course, Patrick Macnee.

Revenge of **FLICKERS** by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



Call Him: E.T.C.

Tom Conti may have won a deserved Oscar not this year, but he's lost the film he'd always wanted to make. *Starman* has gone, instead, to Jeff Bridges, son of Lloyd, brother of Beau and long forgiven (hmm?) for *King Kong*. Jeff's role, the way Conti told me about it last year, has certain echoes of another movie. It's about an alien trapped on earth after missing the last bus home. . . .

Tom Conti was first offered *Starman* four years ago. "It's been on and off the shelf ever since," he said, "with one director or another. It's a jewel of a script! But, obviously, after *E.T.* came out, the opening sequences were very similar and the director then attached to it, said: 'Oh God, no, I can't make this now . . .'"

That director, incidentally, was John Badham. Well, *Starman*'s star man, producer Michael (son of Kirk) Douglas, has come up with the perfect substitute. John Carpenter, no less! And having done so well with various ex-Spielbergers on his *Christine* shoot, John has gone back to Spielbergia for his *Starman*'s lady—Karen Allen. And on to Lucasville for *American Graffiti*'s Charles Martin Smith.

Building Bridges

More important casting: John Carpenter has been rushing around Los Angeles collecting the most elite SPFX force for *Starman*. I mean, how does this grab you: Dick Smith . . . and Rick Baker.

Smith, I gather, is into some new technique for this outing: "Something that's never been seen before." He's spending five months of turning the alien into humanoid form—building Bridges, as you might say.

SHOCK! HORROR!

Don't ask Lord Lucas about Sunday, February 26, 1984. It is to him what Pearl Harbour was to Roosevelt. A day of infamy. It's when that which the Grand Moff Tarkin, Jabba The Hutt and even Big Daddy Vader could never pull off was achieved by Lorimar, the home of *Dallas* and the great god of American tv ratings. *Star Wars*, appearing on US tv for the first time, was soundly defeated in the ratings game by the latest in rubbishy sex 'n' soap mini-series, *Lace*—based on our own Shirley Conran's best-seller.

No kidding!

Pity poor CBS. The network had shelved out as much as \$25 million to grab *Star Wars* for three exclusive screenings. (Lucas never wanted to sell, you might recall; 20th Century-Fox made the deal.) We're home and dry, thought CBS. We can win any night we decide to show the movie. It just didn't work out that way as George's pride and joy suffered the fate of *Chariots of Fire* and *Urban Cowboy*—trounced by tele-

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME



New Bird. With his wife otherwise engaged, Brian De Palma has given his Body Double leading lady role to Melanie Griffith—daughter of The Birds heroine, Tippi Hedren.

pap. And for why? Everyone's got the movies on cassette by now. . . .

And so Bess Armstrong can no longer just be thought of as Tom Selleck's blonde sidekick on *The High Road To China*. Brooke Adams is not only memorable from the last *Body Snatchers* invasion or *Dead Zone*. Herbert Lom has a new rep surpassing his *Pink Panther* and *Cronen-zone* work. French lovely Arielle Dombasle, Yankee looker Phoebe Cates and a whole slew of Brits like Leigh Lawson, Anthony Higgins, Trevor Eve, Anthony Quayle and even old-timer Angela Lansbury have something new to boast about. . . . and so, I suppose, does a run of the mill tele-director like Billy Hale. They're the folk who made *Lace* . . . and turned Luke and Co. into middling ewoks.

Life After Lucas?

Is there life after *Star Wars*? Looks that way. As long as one sticks to tv, at least. Billy Dee Williams, Lando no more, is a tough street cop in *Fear City* before joining *Black Hole*'s Joe Bottoms and Morgan Fairchild in the *Time Bomb* tele-flick. Carrie Fisher is making Sidney Lumet's *Garbo Talks* movie with Anne Bancroft, while preparing her own tele-experience, *The Carrie Fisher Show*, no less. Her writers are Rich Eustis, Michael Elias and Peter Torok-ev. Er, yeah, I think it is an American series. . . .

Corman Wars

Argentine director Hector Olivera has taken over the helming of Roger Corman's *Wizard Wars* movie with Bo Svensson in Buenos Aires. Corman sacked his original choice, Allan Holleb, for "inexperience" (how's the poor guy going to get any if he's fired?). The local wonder-boy will also make Corman's next co-production with the local Aires combine, over there, *The Barbarians*. Olivera's latest home-made flick is a huge hit: *No Habra Mas Penas Ni Olvido*. Which means, I think—and I hope Holleb is reading this—*There Will Be No More Sorrow Nor Oblivion*.

Foxy Caper?

Whether the Disneyites agree or not, I'm sure everyone knows 20th Century-Fox made the first *Star Wars* movie. The studio has tried to make a good sf number ever since. *Alien*, for example. This year's shot is called *Enemy Mine*. Big enough to require location work in Iceland and Hungary. First star to be signed for it is Louis Gosset, last year's supporting actor Oscar winner. More news on this one as it comes to me—via satellite, of course.

John Goes Straight

For the first time since *Star Wars* in 1977, John Williams has been able to score a non-fantasy movie. He's re-

turned to his old director mate, Mark Rydell, for *The River* — a Mel Gibson movie. Williams composed scores for two other Rydell movies, *Cinderella Liberty* in 1973 and, of course, Steve McQueen's production of *The Reivers* in 1969. That was the score which first drew Williams to Spielberg's attention. Rydell wants John for his next flick as well, *When Darkness Falls*, from the first adult book of Paul Zindel. Until now, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright has penned kids' tomes, including one called ... *Pardon Me, You're Stepping On My Eyeball* ... Love to hear Shirley Bassey sing that one!

scenario from Dan O'Bannon, *Screamers*, a *Cisco Kid*-make-and, best of the bunch — Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous With Rama*.

Life of Brian

After his ingenious effects work on *Alien*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Dragonslayer*, Brian Johnson has two Oscars and an Oscar nomination decorating his walls. But now, after 18 months' SPFX for West Germany's *Never Ending Story*, Brian's won the prize of his life — his directing debut.

So far the actioner has no title. No leading man either (the role is described as a sort of American James Bond, oh ho!). Shooting, though, is definitely slated for September in Munich, plus locations throughout Europe as the hunky hero (free in September, Mr Selleck?) chases a gang specialising in stealing luxury cars. Hardly sounds a job for a Bond type, does it?

Brian's backer is Dieter Geissler, the producer of *Never Ending Story* and last year's biggest ever West Germany hit, *A Woman In Flames*.

Effects, Cont'd

As overheard on the SPFX grapevine ... Stan Winston reports to Carpenter's *Starman* after finishing Arnold Schwarzenegger's *Terminator* ... John Caglione, man behind the *Amityville II* and *3-D's* grislies, working on Coppola's *Cotton Club*, aka, *Godfather III*, hmm ... ? John Dykstra and Nick Malley head the crew on Tobe Hooper's *Space Vampires* down Elstree way, with a new French wizard sculptor-painter Jacques Gastineau. He's been described to me as a French Giger; can't be bad ... And it looks as if *Starburst* pal and sometime contributor, Pascal Pinteau, has won the top job on the new top-secret French effects special from writer-director Francis Leroy, except the whole thing is shrouded in such secrecy, no one's confirming anything. Certainly, Pascal is ready for any and all offers. He's now heading up a would-be Paris I.L.M. It's called ... wait for it ... *Spacial Effects*.

Titles of the Year

Latest nominations (so send me yours) ... *Revenge of the Nerds* ... *Uncensored Videos* ... Howzat again? Of course, they're real. It'd be too easy to make 'em up. Maybe the real winner will be the documentary about New York graffiti and break-dancing entitled ... ready, steady ... *Style Wars*.

Space Crews

Latest from Mission Control at MGM is that Helen Mirren — now there is a fantasy female — has the top femme role in 2010. Not the only one one. A certain Natasha Schneider, officially hyped as a Russian rock 'n' roller who defected to America, is playing the Russian cosmonette.

Meanwhile, at his Elstree launchpad, Tobe Hooper has filled his *Space Vampires* ship with Steve Railsback from Hollywood and our own Peter Firth and Frank Finlay. And maybe Mathilda May.

Sam's XYZ

Sam Raimi, still younger than Springtime, darn his hide, has finished *The XYZ Murders*. His cast ranged from newcomers like Reed Birney and Sheree Christopher to *Popeye's* Bluto, Paul L. Smith, *Blade Runner's* brutish android Brian James, Woody Allen's second ex-wife, Louise Lasser and the *Conan/Sisters/Phantom of the Paradise* producer Ed Pressman ... Now I know why Sam kept asking me at Cannes last year if I'd seen Ed around. He wanted to make an actor of him!

Feel Fries

For some 25 years Charles Fries, Chuck to his pals, has been content to be a big wig in US tv. His company turned out tele-movies, often rather good 'uns like *Rage*, *A Cry For Love*, *Leave 'Em Laughing* the Vietnam war saga, *A Rumour of War* — and not quite so successfully, *The Martian Chronicles*. Only time he put his name to a regular cinema movie was as co-producer of Paul Schrader's *Cat People* rehash. Well, now Chuck is going into movies in a big way — with an original horror



Top: Michael Berryman (centre) as Pluto, soon to return in *Wes Craven's The Hills Have Eyes Part 2*. Above: Billy Dee Williams drops his Calisraian gear for a return to TV in the *Time Bomb* movie. His co-stars include Joe Bottoms, out of his *Black Hole*.

Space Blasts!

Illegal Aliens is no more! Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones have re-named their writer-starring galactic jape, *Morons From Outer Space*. Mike Hodges (ex-Flash Gordon) directs this tale of four humanoids from up there on a camping holiday in their Outer Space Recreational Vehicle — and landing on earth, becoming the toast of the media and putting on their own concert in Madison Square Garden. Shooting starts in April. But this is Not The ... Eric Idle space satire. Eric's is *The Road To Mars*.

Akk-Shun!

Suzanna Hamilton made the best of the nude screen tests to win Julia's role opposite John Hurt's Winston Smith in 1984, which is boasting a new colour process for Michael Radford's concept. Now, if he can only get Sean as well ... William Friedkin has Pete Hamill scripting Judgement Day ... Australia's into the Indy Jones rips with Sky Pirates, with Jaws' Ron and Valerie Taylor supplying underwater shots and Jedi sound mixer, Roger Savage, sound editing. Actors? Oh they come later these days, matey ... Wes Craven has completed *The Hills Have Eyes Part 2* with Michael Berryman, Kevin Blair, Tamara Stafford, Pluto, Jupiter and all ... Now Wes is readying his *Nightmare on Elm Street* ... Thom-EMI by the way, are hyping Wes as "The John Ford of horror". What's that make Terrence Fisher ... ? Jerry Goldsmith has won a Disney deal even if his sometime boss, Spielberg, can't Jerry's scoring *Baby* ... Rediscovered in *Psycho II*, Vera Miles stays scared in *Larry Stewart's Initiation* ...

The Cronenberg Tapes 1984:

Part Two

Cover Story



THE DEAD ZONE



In Part one of *The Cronenberg Tapes*: 1984 (see *Starburst* 69) the Canadian film maker discussed the making of *Videodrome*. Although the feature failed to click at the box office in America, and is only now in release in England, David Cronenberg was soon immersed in another project—an adaptation of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone*.

But Cronenberg wasn't the first director to be linked with the project. When *The Dead Zone* was under the aegis of Lorimar, it was slated to be produced by Sydney Pollack and directed by Stanley Donen. At that time, Rafaella de Laurentiis (producer and daughter of Dino) had mentioned to Cronenberg that she had admired *Scanners*

and wondered if the Canadian had any interest in *The Dead Zone*, as a possible future project.

The Dead Zone lapsed with Lorimar and in early 1983, Cronenberg ran into Debra Hill while visiting John Landis' office at Universal. Hill explained that she was now producing *The Dead Zone* on behalf of Dino de Laurentiis and told him that she thought he should direct it and so began David Cronenberg's involvement with the project.

But there were problems to be ironed out as far as the script was concerned. Several drafts had been written, including one by the novel's author. As Cronenberg explains, "We were not happy with any of the scripts that

had been written. I felt that we had to re-adapt the book and forget about what had been written before. Jeffrey Boam's script, which had been written for Stanley Donen, back in the Lorimar days, had something that we thought would make him the right person to do the final script. Debra, Jeffrey and I locked ourselves in a hotel room in Toronto for the three days, and just started to restructure the whole idea. There were many problems to solve, in translating the book to the screen, but there always are."

Why didn't Stephen King's script work? "One of the problems we had to try to solve was that, in the book, there are three parallel stories going all the way through. I didn't ►

Feature by Phil Edwards and Randy Lofficier



think it was possible to do it properly that way in the screenplay. Stephen tried to do it that way, but I didn't think it worked. I also thought that his script gave more emphasis to the Frank Dodd murders than I wanted to in the film I wanted to make. His script was very different from the book – very different in tone. I think that, ironically I suppose, our version of the film is closer in tone to the book than Stephen's script was. He has seen the film and he really liked it. He said that there are some things in the movie that he wished he'd done in the book – which I thought was high praise."

Apart from *Fast Company*, a drag-racing film, *The Dead Zone* is the first film which

Cronenberg has made that is not from his own original story. We asked him how different it was to work from somebody else's material. "It is different because, certainly, it's the first time I've ever had such a substantial, pre-existing story to work on."

"I think that we're very faithful to Stephen. The tone of the characters is very different to what I normally do. My characters are usually urban, sophisticated and a little perverse.

Stephen's tend to be rural, simple and accessible. I didn't want to change that – it's one of the things that attracted me to it. I would never have named a character John Smith, ever! And I didn't change that."

In the work of Stephen King, *The Dead*

Zone marks something of a departure in style and approach for the author. We pointed out to Cronenberg that the film of *The Dead Zone* is as different for him as the book was for the author. "That's an interesting point. It's not his normal kind of writing, that's quite true. As a result, the film is not what most people will come to expect from Stephen King, which is a difficult marketing problem, I think. There are people who don't like the kind of movies that are made from Stephen's work, and I would hate to have those people *not* come to *The Dead Zone* when, in fact, they might like the film very much. I think it has a different, and broader audience than people might expect. If they sell it as another 'nightmare



trip into terror with Stephen King', I think it would be a big mistake. IT's a very melancholy film in some ways, although people do find it tense and compelling, I'm happy to say."

Obviously, working with Dino de Laurentiis must have proved considerably different for Cronenberg and we wondered whether it had presented any problems. "I loved working with him. It's always difficult, because there are so many things to decide and choose from. But, I found that he was accessible. I wouldn't say that we ever really had arguments. We had discussions, we gave to each other veto power. We could both say 'no' to something and we'd both have to

convince each other to say 'yes' to some things. Dino said to me that he would never impose anything on a director that he didn't believe in, and that's proven to be the case.

"There are things I've had to deal with, with other producers, that were a lot harder to take. In general, I think you would be in trouble with Dino if you were really not in sync with what you thought the picture should be. That could be a problem. Perhaps Dino could be a lot tougher or more difficult if those kinds of differences came up. But, both Debra and I tried to be very up-front about anything that was worrying us at the beginning."

A key aspect of *The Dead Zone* is the

character of Johnny Smith, the school teacher who, following a car accident, lapses into a coma for five years and on waking from it discovers that he has intense psychic powers. We asked David Cronenberg whether he had always had Christopher Walken in mind for the role. "No. That was Dino's suggestion. He wanted Chris very badly for the role and, although I had always admired him and wanted to work with him, was worried that he was too old for the part. It wasn't until I could rationalise in my own mind the progress in the script, with someone older than 20 or 22, that I then agreed that Chris would 'work'. I think Chris Walken is fantastically good in this role and some



Facing page, top: Johnny Smith is trapped in a little girl's bedroom. A psychic vision from *The Dead Zone*. Left to right: Christopher Walken gives an outstanding performance as the main character of Stephen King's novel, Herbert Lom as Dr. Sam Weizak, Nicholas Campbell as Frank Dodd, Brooke Adams as Johnny Smith's girlfriend, Sarah Bracknell. Above: Johnny Smith has a vision of Dr Weizak's past. Right: The brooding features of Christopher Walken. Below: Smith takes aim at political candidate Greg Stillson.



people that have seen it think that it's the best thing he's done, which would make it very good indeed."

One of the spectacular sequences in *The Dead Zone* involves one of Smith's visions in which he experiences a flashback to the invasion of Poland at the beginning of World War 2. "We were thinking of shooting that in Yugoslavia, but we ended up doing it outside of Toronto, and it worked great. We were all much happier doing it there, because it was a challenge for everyone to do. We set up a very elaborate day of shooting, which involved a lot of tanks, machine guns, explosions and all kinds of stuff—it was done in an abandoned brick works.

There was a trailer park nearby, and I'm sure they didn't know what was going on! Suddenly, at two o'clock in the morning, these enormous explosions started, machine guns, mortars and everything. I assume one of our people warned them of what was happening, but it still wouldn't have helped them to get any sleep, I'm sure of that!"

During the course of the story, Johnny Smith has several other visions which required various mechanical special effects. But as David Cronenberg points out, "It's not a special effects movie by any stretch of the imagination and they don't overwhelm the film. Actually, when I started to come up with ideas of how the visions would be done, the

writer of the film was very excited about them, but he also began to think that they would be a very dominating factor in the film. He was surprised when he saw how it was still very much a movie of character and character interaction."

As a writer/director, David Cronenberg is well known for his individual approach to film making, a kind of "shoot from the hip" attitude, with much on-set extemporisation and eschewing the use of storyboards. We asked him whether this had changed with *The Dead Zone*. "I never storyboard. In fact, Debra wanted me to try to storyboard for some of the visions and stunts. We did hire a storyboard artist to work on those, but I felt it wasn't profitable. It even tended to cause more confusion than not, because I would update a storyboard and only half the crew would get the updates, so people were working on different assumptions. I never found it useful. The storyboard artist was actually at a disadvantage, because sometimes he'd do them, not even having seen a set, or our models of the set. So what's the use of him drawing some horses falling down from an explosion, when he doesn't even know what angles we're shooting from, what the axis of the action is, etc.

"Except for very special cases, where a certain kind of visual precision is crucial—shooting mattes or something—I can see there why you would just have to do it. But for normal shooting, I just cannot fathom why anyone would want to do it. When you walk onto a set with your actors, you don't want to say, 'You sit over there, the close-up is over here...'. I want to feel out the scene with the actors first. The visuals follow from that."

With *The Dead Zone* completed and released to critical acclaim in America, we asked David Cronenberg whether he would return to writing, as well as directing his own films. "I think it would be very frustrating if I were to think that I would never write again. That's very important to me. On the other hand, it's obvious that I can do a film based on somebody else's work, enjoy it, and feel that the film was a terrific one at the end, as is the case here. So, I would never write that off as another possibility. But, the next thing I intend to do is to write another original script—that's my next project. It's strange, because if I do a film that's not 'mine', I know that there's a film that *could* have been that I'll never know about. You only have so many years to work, and each time I take on someone else's work, I'm going to have that much less time to explore my own."

(Note: Phil Edwards' review of *The Dead Zone* can be found in our Film Review section elsewhere this issue.)



Top: Johnny gets together with his old girlfriend, Sarah. Above: Smith with Sheriff Bannerman (Tom Skerritt) at the scene of one of the Castle Rock murders. Below: Smith uses his psychic powers to track down the killer. Right: Martin Sheen, perfectly hysterical as the ruthless, amoral politician, Greg Stilleen.



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It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan

By the time you read this I should have attended the Second German James Bond Festival which is being held in Berlin in a few weeks from now. If all goes well (ie, I don't end up in Budapest by mistake) I shall report on the event within these pages at a later date. Why am I going? Well, the organisers have kindly invited me as a guest. Only problem is that they expect me to give a talk about my book *James Bond in the Cinema*. As I'm as adept at public speaking as Roger Moore is at playing James Bond I won't be surprised if my German hosts reward me by giving me a one-way ticket into East Berlin...

But if I do manage any coherent sentences I shall definitely include a few words of adverse criticism against my old mate 'Cubby' Broccoli who

prevented the second edition of my Bond book from being published in the U.K. (though hopefully the same fate won't befall the third edition which should be along any year now).

Actually, Mr Broccoli must be feeling somewhat under siege these days. Not only did the rival *Never Say Never Again* make more money than his *Octopussy* but Kevin McClory, one of the producers of *Never* and the man who owns the remake rights to *Thunderball*, has announced in *Variety* that he is to produce a new series of James Bond movies, the first to be titled *S.P.E.C.T.R.E.* Presumably, like *Never*, this will have to be another remake of *Thunderball* (this time *S.P.E.C.T.R.E.* steals two Pershing missiles and hides them in the Thames?) but I can't imagine Broccoli letting him get away with this

without launching another legal broadside.

Sean Connery, during his promotion tour for *Never*, had a number of unkind things to say about Mr Broccoli. In one interview Connery accused Broccoli and UIP of an 'harassment job' against him. "For example, he said, 'the National Film Theatre was holding a retrospective of my films and Broccoli and UIP withheld *Dr No* and *From Russia With Love*, probably because they were the two I didn't own a piece of and therefore they wouldn't be in breach of contract. They did the same in Paris at the Cinematheque and that got up my nose more than anything. So I got in touch with Frank Yablans who's now head of UIP and he turned it around..."

Connery also revealed that Broccoli has an 18% share in *Never*, which makes his attempts to block the movie's release even harder to understand.

But it wasn't just Broccoli who got the verbal boot from Connery; the plain-speaking millionaire Scotsman used the promotion tour as an opportunity to air his grievances against Jack Schwartzman, producer (with McClory) of *Never*. "He is unfortunately a lawyer and works better as a lawyer than a producer in my opinion," said Connery while in London (he said even harsher things in France, as Tony Crawley reported back in *Starburst 68*). "I didn't know before I started the

picture that Schwartzman had been Kershner's lawyer and they were still having a running battle about a contract. It was just the sort of Hollywood mess I abhor."

Connery blamed Schwartzman for the confusion and apparent chaos that dominated the making of the movie and for the fact that *Never* ended up overlong. "A lot of the Bondian elements that we'd shot were cut out at one stage. Poor Klaus Brandauer would have suffered, and Max Von Sydow. I insisted we get back to the original construction that I'd agreed to." If Connery hadn't exerted his influence over the production he feels we'd still be waiting for the film's release.

Kershner was going to edit one section, Schwartzman another and Warners were going to mediate between them. We'd still be editing now if that had gone on." Even so, despite Connery's efforts, the length of the film meant that some scenes had to be cut, most of them involving Max Von Sydow's portrayal of Blofeld. "Max had some great scenes cut," said Connery, "A lot of marvellous stuff..."

Among the material cut out was Blofeld's death scene. After Largo was killed underwater there was supposed to be a sequence where Blofeld attempts to contact him on his TV communicator and gets Bond instead. Blofeld's surprised reaction causes his white cat to scratch him. A previous sequence, also cut, at *SPECTRE* head-

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quarters, had established that the cat's claws were coated with poison and so Blofeld dies horribly – zapped by his own moggy ...

Connery had director approval, script approval and control over the casting. He was also the one who brought in British writers Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais because he thought there was a danger of the movie being too American in its humour. He was considerably annoyed that they weren't given any credit. "I was furious about that. The American Writers Guild should be taken to task. I tried but there was no way the Guild would break their tradition of giving the first person who worked on the screenplay the credit. But Ian and Dick's contribution was enormous – much greater than Semple's."

That it was Connery who was mainly responsible for making *Never Say Never* the success it is was confirmed by one of his co-stars, Kim Basinger, in an interview in one of the Sunday colour supplements: "There were a lot of problems upstairs," she says, referring to disagreements among the film's producers. "We'd be doing a scene and these guys would be squabbling in the corner. Some of the guys had made a movie before but none of them had made a Bond movie before. If Sean Connery hadn't taken over, the film wouldn't have had any chance at all. As it is, if it turns out to be great, it will be on the the biggest mistakes in the



Sean Connery's first portrayal of the suave, debonair, smooth-talking J.B. (James Bond that is, not John Brosnan) in *Dr No*.

history of the industry."

Well, I wouldn't describe *Never* as a great movie but it's certainly the best Bond movie to appear for a number of years in spite of all its flaws. Thankfully,

one of the proposed flaws never made it into the film – none other than Roger Moore. "One of the Warner Brothers guys came up with a suggested ending," said Connery at a press confer-

ence. "It had Bond and Domino walking down Piccadilly and we see Roger. We react and he says, 'Sean, never say never again.' But it never got past the lawyers. A pity. It would have been kind of fun."

I disagree, Mr Connery. Rowan Atkinson was bad enough but Roger Moore ... ?

NASTY NEWSDESK

It's time for my monthly moan about the crazy "video nasty" witch-hunt which seems to have got the police forces of the nation all worked up to the point that it's a wonder they have time for any other duties. Latest example of law enforcement looniness, at the time of writing, was a police raid on the film and video distributors Palace Video. The police seized over 1,500 copies of *Evil Dead* from Palace's Scala cinema in London and also from their Leyton warehouse.

By an odd coincidence the raid occurred on the very day that the London magazine *Time Out* advertised an "Anti-Censorship Festival" in association with the Scala cinema. The Festival (over and done with by the time you read this) will consist of movies, all with British film censor certificates, that have been labelled as "video nasties" in their video form. One of the titles listed was, of course, *Evil Dead* ...

What next, I wonder? ■



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INTERVIEW:

Joe Dante

Interview by Phil Edwards and
Francesca Landau

Since *Starburst* last interviewed Joe Dante (way back in issues 36/37 for those of you keeping score) there have been substantial changes in the movie director's career.

Dante happened across the world of moviemaking almost by accident. He switched from cartooning to a film course during his college days. At the same time he was contributing articles to Forry Ackerman's legendary fantasy magazine, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, and the late lamented *Castle of Frankenstein* mag. His first moneymaking film project was a compilation of clips from bad serials and B-movies entitled *The Schlitz Movie Orgy*. The project was financed by the Schlitz Beer brewery, and Dante toured American colleges with his film and his collaborator Jon Davison. When Davison joined Roger Corman's New World production company he recommended to any one who would listen that Dante ought to be part of the team too. Dante was signed up and began to toil in the trailers department of New World.

Joe Dante's first feature as a director came about after he bet Roger Corman that he could produce a full-length feature film for less money than any other Corman movie... no mean achievement. The film was *Hollywood Boulevard*, a crazed homage to, and parody of, Corman and the New World company.

After that came the highly entertaining and successful *Piranha*, also for New World, and *The Howling*... but the big break came when Dante was hired by movie Midas Steven Spielberg to helm one of the segments of *The Twilight Zone*. Recently Dante completed *Gremlins*, also for Spielberg, a film which has all the hallmarks of being one of 1984's Summer blockbusters.



STARBURST: How were the stories chosen for *The Twilight Zone*?

JOE DANTE: Well, when I came onto the project there was already a movie that they had been trying to make for a couple of years. Warner Bros owned the rights to the title, *The Twilight Zone*. They had bought Viacom, the syndication company that owns *Twilight Zone*, and so, they had been casting about for awhile, trying to find a way to make one picture with that title, but they couldn't really find a suitable story. Then it was either Steven (Spielberg) or John (Landis), I really don't remember which, came up with the idea of doing more than one story and with different directors. So by the time I came along it

was decided it was going to be three stories, and both Steven and John knew which ones they wanted to do. Steven was originally going to do *It's a Good Life* and John was going to do his own. Steven still wanted *It's a Good Life* in the picture, so he said, "Let's ask Joe if he wants to do it." So it wasn't like, "Which story do you want to do?" It was, "Do you want to do this story?"

Which story would you have chosen if you had been able to do so?

I wouldn't have chosen an old one. There are too many good science fiction stories that don't get adapted anymore, because there aren't any programmes like *The Twilight Zone*. The best material, I



Facing page: A scene from *The Howling*, and director Dante with Eddie the werewolf. This page: Three special effects shots from *It's a Good Life*, Joe Dante's segment of *The Twilight Zone*.



think that the show came up with was when they went back to the stuff by Charles Beaumont and Richard Matheson — short stories that had originally been published years before.

Did you watch a lot of Twilight Zone as a child?
Mmmm... I remember the night it came on. It was 1959 and it was the pilot episode, which was the only one that had a rational explanation at the end, which was something they had to do in order to sell the series. Everybody in school the next day was talking about it. I don't think this goes on anymore, because there's so much television, but in those days, when a great show had been on, kids would talk about it in school. It was true for *Twilight Zone*, *Thriller* and

Alfred Hitchcock Presents. We were lucky — we were just before the age when kids wanted to go out on Friday night — we'd stay up on Friday night! The first year of *The Twilight Zone* was just amazing; just dramatically superior to a lot of stuff that was on TV.

It hasn't really been touched, in terms of quality, has it?
Oh, it may have, along the line. But the circumstances of its production — the fact that it was made on back-lot movie sets with technicians that were making feature films as opposed to people that had grown up making television, just gave it a technical veneer that, combined with the quality of the acting

and the simplicity of the production, just made it hard to beat. When it went to an hour it became cumbersome, and even *Thriller*, which was a very nicely produced show, frequently seemed padded. The format of having short stories, plus a narrator that explained who a character is at the beginning means you don't have to set up a whole half hour of exposition and just allowed them to get to the point so much quicker.

That was something that happened to Twilight Zone itself when it was extended to an hour in the 1963 season.

Well, yes. It was almost as if they had taken the same kind of stories and shown you the first half hour ►

INTERVIEW:

Joe Dante

before the narrator explained the set-up. The half hour show was a great piece of TV shorthand.

In making the feature, you had to also work within the confines of the 30 to 40 minute format. How did you find working within those confines as opposed to working with a feature length?

I found it wonderful. I had just previously made my first television show, a half hour comedy called *Police Squad*, of which there were only six episodes by the guys who produced *Airplane*. It was made very quickly and it was very short, and I found the short form very liberating in the sense that you're not responsible for directing people's attention over a span of 90 minutes. There's a lot more freedom, in the sense that no matter how much time you have, you have a little more time because there's that extra hour of material that you haven't touched yet. *Did you think that four Twilight Zone episodes would work well as a feature film?*

I didn't know. My familiarity with multi-episode films was almost entirely with foreign films... it was very seldom done in American films... the Italian films like *Bamboli* and *Ragopag*. There was *Dead of Night*, of course, which is still the best one and there had been a lot of Amicus films, none of which, to me, had ever been entirely successful. The problem with more than one story is that there is always going to be one part that somebody is going to like more than another. There's always one story that's going to make the other stories look "bad" or "good" or slow or fast. And to try and find a format that can encompass all those stories, or types of stories has really only been done in *Dead of Night* (Ealing, 1946). It's the only one where the framing story is as interesting or more interesting than the stories that are around it. *The Twilight Zone* doesn't have a framing story. The original idea was that characters would go from one episode to another and it would all seem to be linked, as one piece of work. But after all the problems that were experienced during the production, it ended up being four distinctly separate stories and as late as two months before the picture came out, we really didn't know what order we were going to put them in, or how we were going to link them together.

Did the accident on John Landis' episode effect the rest of the picture, like there was something hanging over the rest of the production?

I think everybody was shocked and upset, as anybody would be. I don't think anybody else felt this made them culpable and that they shouldn't work on the film, or anything like that. It was pretty much remote from the rest of the picture because it was shot in a different locale with a different crew, so it was almost like it had happened on the first episode of a TV series. So in that sense it didn't affect anything. I think it *did* in the sense of the idea of having characters going from one story to another and indeed what order the stories would be in. The picture then progressed in fits and starts. I did my episode, then George (Miller) did his and Steven his, but there wasn't a lot of momentum after the accident.

Something that's obvious from your episode is an enormous interest in cartoons. Have you always been a fan of animation?

Well, yeah... I'm sure the first movie I saw was *Snow White* or *Peter Pan* or something that my parents took me to. And I wanted to be a cartoonist and I have a great interest in all the works of the various cartoon directors. In doing *It's a Good Life*, which is a story that had been done quite well



Above: Joe Dante lines up a low-angle shot for dramatic effect in *The Twilight Zone*. Below: Dante, with furry friend, on the set of *The Howling*.

originally on television, I just wanted to change it a bit and make it a little more relevant to me. And I think one good thing about the story format is that story didn't have to hold the burden of the film, be the one to advertise on TV to get people off their couches to go and see this movie!

How did the visual concept for your episode evolve?

Once Richard Matheson and I decided that the milieu wouldn't be a rural farmhouse in the middle of nowhere in 1950, it was going to be a modern version of the same idea, we just decided that a kid today who had "powers" might get into would be TV. Since my fantasy world is cartoons, why shouldn't his be? We looked at a lot of cartoons before we started adapting it and there was a Chuck Jones cartoon called *Mouse Wreckers* which had the perfect, idealised interior house set. You know the ones, where the cat and the mouse will chase each other and will just keep running and running and the backgrounds keep changing so it ends up looking like the house is the size of the Grand Canyon! We pretty much adapted that. We just said, "Let's build it." We built something that was kind of like it, though not exactly. Colourwise it was pink... and bright colours... it was a little nauseating actually! The sets were built off-scale; there were no right angles. There was a staircase you couldn't walk up, because it got smaller at the top. It was a forced

perspective design which wasn't readily apparent when you visited the set. It was only when you walked down the corridors that you could see this. None of that is in the picture in the sense that we don't have Steadicam shots walking down this hallway, but it does make it look "different", in a way that you can't really do with lenses.

Although your episode is great fun and very interesting to look at, it does have a very disturbing undercurrent.

Well, I think that disturbing things are always pretty interesting, because it makes you wonder why they disturb you? What is it about this that's disturbing? The juxtaposition of that kind of unpleasantness with the cartoon noises and the things we have all been trained to think of as benign, and which are in a sense, but nonetheless express some deeper, darker side of us — I'm not somebody who subscribes to the idea that kids shouldn't be allowed to watch violent cartoons, because kids are constantly underestimated. People are trying to keep things away from kids, thinking that they can't deal with them and, the average child today at 10 is probably as smart as I was when I was 14, at least in terms of his ability to take things in. There's just so much more stimuli. Society is changing and I think that cartoons have traditionally been a great outlet for kids. I don't remember kids trying to burn their little



brothers the way Tom and Jerry did!
We found the ending of your episode a little ambiguous.

Some people have said, "How come it has a happy ending. The original didn't have one?" I don't regard this as a happy ending! It strikes me, that since these two characters both have something missing in their lives, and they have both found somebody who can supply the things that are missing, that the fact that they get together doesn't necessarily mean that everything is going to be wonderful.

The impression that we received was that the Kathleen Quinlan character was as much interested in Anthony's powers as she was in helping him.

Well, good. Because that was sort of what we were after, although a lot of people just thought it was unbelievable, like, "This kid is too scary, she'll just get into trouble." As if she was just playing the entire thing like she was Beaver Cleaver's mother! That's not really the way we intended it. Steven kept saying, "Well, we have to do a sequel. I wanna know what happens!" For a while he wanted me to do a feature, based on this episode which I hope, by now, I've been able to talk him out of! He was curious just to see what would happen to these two people, how she would use his powers and how maybe he would catch on and not let her. It's ambiguous enough for me. I'd rather do that than the ending we had originally tossed around which was an apocalyptic kind of house blowing up thing. Briefly, this was scheduled to be the last episode of the picture and I even went out and shot an ending the night he (John) did his opening scene. But to me, it wasn't very satisfactory to have this woman running away from the house with the kid and all these people dead. It was sort of what bothered me about the original story which was that it ended on this totally bleak note, that these people were never going to be able to escape from this kid's power. Which is fine, but is not a very typical *Twilight Zone* ending – it's one of the bleakest in the show's history. Also, when the story was written, it wasn't the cliché that it is now. For a while it was a cliché to have happy endings and then they started to have unhappy endings—like there would be the track back into the monster's lair and there would be a hiccup or a burp and you knew there were going to be more monsters!

You did the same thing yourself in The Howling...
And I also did it in *Piranha*. I'm tired of doing it! (laughs)

How did you cope with the special effects at the end of your episode?

For effects that were essentially designed to be simple, they were very complicated and time consuming. Rob Bottin didn't have a lot of time and there really wasn't a lot of money, because this was not the most expensive movie ever made. He went off into his little room and came up with some designs based on some Tex Avery cartoons we had shown him and some Car Culture things from his youth. There was a guy named Bid Daddy Roth who used to do these weirdo car drawings with drivers that were monsters with big heads and so forth. So we combined all this with some stuff that's known only to him, where he gets it, into a series of designs for a monster that could come out of a television set and also the rabbit gag, which was based on the *Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, where Bullwinkle the Moose used to pull things out of a hat... it was supposed to be a rabbit and it would be a big rhinoceros or something.

How were the effects achieved?

These were all mechanical effects, in that they had to be manipulated on stage and done with people underneath things controlling them with wires and cables. It's very time consuming because the more



Above: Jeremy Licht as a young boy with awesome powers of suggestion and Kathleen Quinlan as a woman who finds herself powerless against his will in *The Twilight Zone*. Below: The school teacher is trapped in a cartoon world of a young boy's imagination.

people it takes to operate a piece of machinery, the more difficult it is to frame it. In fact, the studio has a policy of not shooting anything in 1:1:33, which is television ratio, which is why you sometimes see pictures on TV with microphones visible. Well, we didn't want this picture to go on TV and see people's hands or heads at the bottom of the frame. So we had quite a battle to shoot the special effects shots in 1:1:85 so we knew where the bottom of the frame was. (We also found this to be a problem on *Gremlins*, but we managed to get the whole picture shot on 1:1:85 which was a break.) That, and plus the fact we had to keep changing camera speeds all the time. This was because the human operation of mechanical devices tends to get into a "by rote" way of operating. There's a certain rhythm that appears that you can vary if you can change the camera running speed. John Hora, the cinematographer has an assistant that was particularly adept at changing camera speeds. This involves changing the Fstop as well, because if you change the speed, the light level changes as well. Sometimes you get a bump and a little flare. There are almost no shots in the picture involving special effects that didn't have a change in camera speed. This something we learned on *The Howling*, to even manipulate within the shot. The shot might start at 24fps (frames per second) then go down to 12fps, then back up to 24 and then go to

30fps. Then, when you watch it, you end up picking out the pieces that look like they're the most realistic. The one slight kicker is that you really can't leave them on for very long. In early cuts we had lots of time on screen with the monsters but less is usually more with monsters.

Are there any significant cuts in the film?

There are cuts, but they're not significant. One thing that was cut was the beginning of the story, which we had to cut because the order of the episodes changed, and I had already tied it in with George's. It's just that the lead character is pretty much at sea in her life... her mother's died and she's decided she wants to give up teaching, which are two things that aren't in any more. As a result, you really have to pay attention to know she's a school teacher at all. Her character was deliberately played on purpose to be withdrawn and polite, but I thought it did lose a little bit by not being able to show that she was in a very free situation and moving from one town to another, with no real prospects. There are still things in there that explain that.

There were some other cuts: a sequence where they go into the kitchen to get some food which I cut out and was originally going to be a complicated special effects scene, but it was the wrong place for special effects; there was another scene where the kid leaves his bike at the diner and another kid



Joe Dante

comes along and tries to steel it and gets an electric shock. But all the other trims were basically dialogue, although we did "kill" off everybody in the house . . . well, not kill them off, really. But just before they all went to Nowhere Land there were a lot of lightning flashes and people running around screaming. It was just a little too heavy-handed. It just seemed better to have everybody "go away" at the same time. It was a pity in a way, because Kevin McCarthy had a little bit of business with a bottle of liquor that was funny.

How closely did you work with Richard Matheson on the script?

Very closely. It was one of the most rewarding times I've had with a writer because, for one thing Richard



is steeped in the values of the original show and he's very imaginative, very low-key and very responsive. He will try almost anything and he's also the kind of guy that, if he feels strongly about something, will give you a real good argument! I hope to work with him again, he's a very nice guy.

How did you work with Steven Spielberg as producer on 'Twilight Zone'?

Well, he and John produced the picture, but a lot of it was also done by Frank Marshall as Steven was planning *Raiders 2* and John was going to do *Trading Places* and it wasn't that the picture didn't have a direction because that's giving entirely the wrong idea. It was an exercise in artistic freedom because there was nobody looking over our shoulders saying, "What is this? What are you doing?" I was, frankly, a little concerned. I would go to the set and have these people overacting. It was all a little broader than it appeared to be in the script. I was a little concerned that the Warner Bros. people might be looking at me and wondering exactly what the hell I was trying to do. But they were very good about it and Steven was totally supportive of it and came to the set once to meet the cast and said he didn't want to see the film until it was finished (something he also told me on *Gremlins*). It also happened when George Miller mounted a very elaborate and complicated story with a great deal of



technical complexity, and he never batted an eye about that either. So as a result, for good or ill, whatever people think of the movie, it's a fairly rare example of people being let alone to do more or less what they wanted.

And you say this is also the case on Gremlins? The reason we ask is after the Poltergeist furore, there is an image of Steven Spielberg as the interfering producer.

That hasn't happened in my case and I haven't seen any evidence of it, other than that particular situation. He's been totally "hands-off". In script stage and casting he definitely has his influence, but it's his movie, he's the executive producer and has money in it and I'm working for him so I don't resent him giving me his input. But it's never gotten to the point where he's stepped in and told me how to do anything. He didn't look at the dailies (rushes).

Where did Gremlins originate?

Gremlins started as an idea with a writer, whose (real) name is Chris Columbus. He wrote it up as script, to amuse himself and I guess he gave a copy of it to his agent and Steven saw it. At one time he may have entertained ideas of doing it himself. But long before I had anything to do with *Twilight Zone* I received a call that Steven wanted to meet me. I couldn't imagine why he would want to see me unless he wanted to yell at me because he had just seen *Piranha*! Anyway, I met him and he had this project that he wanted me to read and it turned out to be *Gremlins*. I took it back and I liked it, but my only reservation was that it would be too expensive to make, it's loaded with special effects and at the time I thought the only way to do it would be stop-motion. I told him this, but he said, "No, no, no, I've got some ideas." I signed on to the picture and started doing storyboards because with the complexity of the special effects we realised we wouldn't

be able to shoot the picture right away. It was going to take time to design the things, build them and figure out ways to make them work and what we all thought would be a small picture developed into a somewhat bigger deal, particularly when Warner Bros became involved and it became a studio picture with all the added complexities that entails. *Do you find it difficult to function in the studio system?*

I don't find it *difficult*, I find it *different*. It is sometimes very vexing. There are times when the system just seems to conspire against you. The way the system works is *the way the system works* and, if you happen to want to make a film under that system, then you have to abide by the system, or you don't make the film. It can be very annoying when you are used to getting things done immediately. Things take more time because there are more people and it's more complicated, although the amount of time you end up actually having to shoot it not really that much more than if it was a non-union picture. Also on the other hand, you get better material; better art direction; people who are very good at what they do, not tentatively figuring out what they want to do. There are terrific resources but you still have to abide by the rules and you can't break them. One of the things that allow you to make a non-union picture is that there are rules to break. Anyway, we were at this stage on *Gremlins*, when *The Twilight Zone* came along.

What sort of movie is Gremlins?

Gremlins is sort of a situation-fantasy as opposed to a situation-comedy! It's an attempt to make a very old-fashioned movie about sort of new-fashioned ideas. It takes place at Christmas in a small town in America. We were torn between going on location to some bucolic little town in Washington or shooting it all on the back-lot. But we decided to do the

latter, because it looks more stylised and is a little more reminiscent of old movies. When you go out to a real place, it never looks like those Frank Capra movies that were shot on the back-lot! There's also the rising cost of shooting on location. In the end, making it a "back-lot movie" was the only way we could do it because the effects are so complicated. If we had lugged them all up into the bitter cold of night—a lot of the movie takes place at night—and shooting special effects in the snow, we'd probably still be there now! At this point though, it's hard to say. I haven't seen the whole picture together. It's running a mammoth three hours which I would like to get down to 90 minutes, but I'm sure I won't be able to do that. There are so many characters in it that I can't do my usual ruthless chopping that I do with all my other stuff!

Why do you see 90 minutes as an ideal running time?

In the 30s, many of the greatest movies that were made only ran 70 to 75 minutes. On the other hand, some 3 hour movies are among my favourite movies. But it seems to me that a picture needs to be pretty good to justify being much longer than 90 minutes. And lately, I've noticed the trend towards making pictures longer for no discernable reason. Most pictures I can think of, you could cut five minutes out of it and it would be better for the picture. It's a matter of indulgence. I try not to be indulgent in the editing because I learned from Roger Corman that "less is more". In trailers that's true too. If you show too much, that's worse than not showing enough. ■

Next month: Joe Dante discusses his early career at New World Pictures, his thoughts on what exactly makes a good horror picture and the effects of video on the movie industry.



Facing page: Three atmospheric shots from *The Howling* with Robert Picardo as the unfortunate lycanthrope, Eddie Quist. Right: A monstrous rabbit leaps out of a hat to ensnare Kevin McCarthy in *The Twilight Zone*.

Blood Feast-2

Feature by Alan Jones

Are you ready for *Blood Feast 2*? Producers Eric Caidin and Jimmy Lee Maslin seem to think we are. Caidin owns the successful establishment "Hollywood Book and Poster" at 1706 N. Las Palmas just off Hollywood Boulevard and together with his partner Lee formed a company a year ago called Epics International. Lee was able to locate the video rights to the two most famous seminal gore movies of our time *Blood Feast* and *2000 Maniacs* directed by the infamous King of Splatter, Herschell Gordon Lewis. The response to the re-release of both films from consumers, college students and film historians alike made them seriously think about doing a similar film in the same vein until, as Caidin says, "A sequel to the original film seemed to be the most obvious answer. We had the opportunity to do it and it seemed a shame to waste it."

The original *Blood Feast* was made in 1963 and concerned a demented Egyptian caterer called Fud Ramses who attempts to bring the ancient goddess of Ishtar back to life by dismembering noble young women and ends up being crushed in the back of a garbage truck. With its groundbreaking scenes of explicit and bloody violence and the retrospective camp of the hilariously bad performances, *Blood Feast* fully deserves its somewhat faddish cult status.

In the script Caidin and Moslin are getting together the story is a continuation of the original film. "Most of the characters survive in the first film and it is our intention to modernise the story and take it in an even wilder direction. Set in 1983 - 20 years after the original murders have taken place - it concerns the relatives of the maniac Ramses trying to perform the same type of rituals to resurrect him so Ishtar can be invoked once again along with the spirit of a lesser Egyptian god who was vaguely mentioned in the first film."

Caidin realises that a lot has happened since *Blood Feast*'s original release in 1963 and it is now not that easy to shock or repel an audience. "We are going for a very realistic approach. We want to make the violence more serious than the original because you do laugh at it more than recoil. It is going to be very hard to top. *Blood Feast* was a masterpiece because nothing had ever been seen like it at the time. We are all more jaded now what with films like *Dr Butcher M.D.* but I have no doubt in my mind that we can aspire to a super-shock level."

The planned budget for *Blood Feast 2* is at the moment somewhere between a quarter and a half of a million dollars, "But we could go higher if the script impresses a lot of investors. That is why we have to get the character development right and make sure it is a good story that will appeal to everybody's tastes and not just the exploitation horror buffs. If we could achieve something like the effect of *The Evil Dead* then I would be very happy indeed."

The allusion to *The Evil Dead* could go further too if Caidin gets his wish and entices that film's special effects wizard, Tom Sullivan, to work on *Blood Feast 2*. "We are talking to Tom because what he achieved on *The Evil Dead* with no money was nothing short of miraculous. He says he hasn't seen the original

film but I know this would be right up his alley as it would give him the opportunity to go absolutely crazy and experiment. I think he would really enjoy working on our film. I consider him a young Tom Savini because the achievements on his very first film were mind-boggling."

A veritable roster of exploitation names are set to star in *Blood Feast 2*. "We see Camille Keaton, the star of *I Spit on Your Grave*, in one of the main leads. We also have a professional wrestler who has never appeared in a film before and Michael Berryman, the bald villain from *The Hills Have Eyes* and *Deadly Blessing*. We also want to include some of the members of the original cast if it is at all possible. Thomas Wood is still acting. He was in *Absence of Malice* recently. We have also contacted Connie Mason who now lives in Florida with her daughter who is a dead ringer for her mother circa the time of *Blood Feast* and is also a Playboy Bunny. So both of them would be ideal."

Both Caidin and Lee want director Herschell Gordon Lewis involved every step of the way with

the new project. "Jimmy is in contact with him almost on a weekly basis. He has script approval and will be creative consultant if he doesn't feel he would like to direct. At the moment he is writing the sleeve notes for an album we have coming out containing the theme music from *Blood Feast*, *2000 Maniacs*, *Just For The Hell of it* and *How to make a Doll*."

And if Lewis doesn't want to direct Caidin feels they have a perfect replacement. "John Waters is a definite possibility - even as co-director with Lewis. They both have a lot of respect for each other especially as Waters interviewed him for his book *Shock Value*. I told Waters all about it at Filmex last year."

"We really do have to make something special to cut through today's gore saturated market. We are really coming in on the tail end of that trend but we really mean to get down to business. *The Evil Dead* proved there is still a profitable market for this type of picture and we mean to deliver a good low budget example of the medium."





This spread: A tasteless selection of disgusting scenes from the original Blood Feast (1963), directed by the infamous "King of Splatter", Herschell Gordon Lewis.



SWORD of the VALIANT



A Starburst Film Review by Tony Crawley

Another re-make? Yeah. But one with a difference. The same director has helmed both versions for a start. That's very rare. Film-makers who have... pulled off that trick before can be numbered on one hand, or so. Off the top of my thinning head I can only, immediately, think of Howard Hawks, he never stopped making *Rio Bravo* (only the titles were changed to protect innocent filmgoers)... Cecil B. De Mille did *The Ten Commandments* twice over and adored breaking all the naughty ones on-screen... and a Japanese director, name of Tetsuji Takechi, has lately made his 18-year-old *Daydream* all over, greatly improving the original.

Stephen Weeks has been pretty speedy with this re-tread. He last made *Sword of the Valiant* in 1973. Only then it was called *Gawain and the Green Knight* and it didn't do that well. Murray Head, the *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* actor turned singer (such a fave rave with the French he's recording in now) was Gawain and the late Nigel Green was the other half of the title.

Obviously, like John Boorman and the Holy Grail quest, Weeks just can't leave the story alone. This time, he's made it in richer style. With his co-writer and exec. producer from

last time, Philip M. Breen, Weeks has a trifle more money at his disposal. Hefty backing from the mightier-by-the-hour Cannon Group – and a cast to prove it.

The ex-Tarzan turned Italian thud 'n' blunder hero and French-style Bond, Miles O'Keefe plays the feckless, young Sir Gawain in what appears to be a cast-off Bette Davis blonde wig. Tasty French dish Cyrielle Clair is the mystery maid, Linet. Trevor Howard is the king and Oscar-winner Lila Kedrova, dear old Peter Cushing, handsome Leigh Lawson join *Raiders'* stand-outs, Ronald Lacey and John Rhys-Davies, in the supporting cast of medievals.

And towering over 'em all – in glory and due to the antlers atop his wig – Sean Connery is the new Green Knight. He shot his scenes amidst the filming on his recent Bond comeback, *Never Say Never Again*.

The setting, of course, is Camelot. (Oh c'mon, you must've known that). It's mystical times. Merry, too, as the knights celebrate Christmastide – until stilled by the ghostly apparition of the Green Knight. Fierce and proud on his horse, he dares anyone to solve his riddle. Lose – and you lose your life.

A young page, Gawain, accepts the challenge. Everyone is so struck by his foolhardy courage, he's immediately knighted by the King. So it's Sir Gawain who rides off to break the twisted conundrum – in one year, or else the pain in his neck will be an axe.

During his journeying he comes across the misty land of Lyonesse and the fair young Linet. Very smitten with her, he is, but as fast as she and it appeared, Lyonesse vanishes. Gawain is not just a pretty wig, though. He decides that part of the knight's riddle is solved with Linet's disappearance – solving the riddle and finding the maiden again are, perhaps, one and the same quest.

It's a hectic twelvemonth. Gawain comes across various enemies, many battles – and scanty seconds with Linet again. He begins to wear a green scarf around his neck in memory of her.

He feels he has solved the puzzle – almost – when the Green Knight descends upon him. The year is up. Gawain, battered and beaten by his year long quest, has lost. He'd led into the Green Knight's cavern to meet his fate.

His head is on the chopping block. The Green Knight raises his axe – and strikes his blow. The axe falls... but it hardly scratches the younger knight's neck. The green scarf has saved him...

Now it's Gawain's turn to strike a fatal blow... Slash, bang, thump – and in the best of Dracula fashion, the Green Knight withers into ashes... or is it mildew?

And as our hero clambers out of the cavern, who should be waiting for him but... Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus with another Cannon offer? No, the sumptuous Linet, of course. This is all in the mystic ages, remember...



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A few months back I summed up the success of *Blakes 7*. There was no denying that the series had a particular charm all its own and for the most part came over as a satisfying piece of undemanding entertainment. But that is also the kind of statement that refers to the latest series of *Doctor Who*, and with the BBC's longest running show critique of that nature reads more as an insult. At the risk of upsetting a lot of people it has to be said that *Doctor Who* is not what it was, or who it was. Peter Davison, who bowed out at the completion of *The Caves of Androzani* story never quite achieved the fame and popularity of his former selves. He looked for the most time, unrelaxed in the part and very confused. He also had to wear a ridiculous stick of celery that remained a mystery to viewers as important as the disappearance of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*. I'm afraid this failure to capture an on-screen personality even rubbed off on his companions, a motley group of flippant, irritating character actors with far too much self-importance. One prime example of this occurred when the Doctor fighting off an enemy soldier, fell into a deep water tank at the conclusion of one of the first episodes. Instead of building up the climax by showing Turlough and Tegan trapped outside the room, unable to get in and help the Doctor, they just dismissed him as having drowned and quickly retreated. It had already been established that they were in no risk of being shot at as seconds before the enemy commander had instructed his men not to use their guns within the confines of the control room. All this did then, was to underline the callous attitude of the TARDIS' occupants.

I have to confess an overall disappointment with the story *Warriors of the Deep*, particularly the arrival of the *Myrka*, which did I'm afraid, resemble a badly constructed pantomime horse. Continuity lapses during the story also spoiled the enjoyment. Flaps of skin hanging over the clothes of the Silurians and, in one agonisingly long sequence, a Sea Devil's head flopped to one side, unbeknown to the actor, giving it the appearance of having a crick in the neck. All glaring discrepancies that should have been corrected. Were the whole TV crew asleep I wonder? Come on BBC it's all we've got in the way of science fiction on television, let's look after it. I have a sneaky feeling that the problem is, like George Lucas with *The Return of the Jedi*, the BBC know full well that it has a captive audience with *Doctor Who*; thousands of dedicated fans (the trampled flower beds at Longleat confirm this) who will watch the series whatever happens. Unfortunately this encourages the Corpora-

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss

tion to be lazy with the show, allowing shoddy effects and as noted in *The Caves of Androzani*, a command centre interior that closely resembled a portalo. And if John Nathan Turner gets his own way and axes the TARDIS, in Police Box form, then I can only say scrap the series and give us something totally new.

Of course this fuss over the Police Box could be a clever publicity trick to capitalise on the show's recent success abroad. Half of North America

are now keen fans, or so we are told, hence the introduction (I'm convinced that my suspicions are correct) of the Doctor's latest female companion, Peri. Isn't it also true that the Doctor has gone through too many character changes even for a lifetime as long as his. Okay, so facelifts and plastic surgery are part of our way of life, but just because you receive a new nose and smaller teeth, it doesn't instantly turn you from a tenable know-all into a vulner-

able clown. Of course here the script writers are mostly to blame having successfully thrown logic out of the window and washed their hands, very conveniently, of anything that might have happened in the past 20 years, or in the next, depending on how you look at it.

That is a mistake. Even a fantasy programme like *DR. WHO* needs a set of rules, a foundation on which to build new ideas and characters. Undermine that and you undermine the very concept of the series. I suppose the attitude is "Who cares, most kids today don't even remember the old stories". Well that's very true, their earliest recollections are, in some cases, Jon Pertwee. But I'm afraid that's a very flimsy excuse and almost as bad as JNT's suggestion that the validity of removing the TARDIS in its present form, is because hardly anyone can even remember what a Police Public Call Box looks like in real life. Well who ever seen a Silurian in real life?

While on the subject of *Doctor Who* the latest edition to the *Who* library, *The Unfolding Text* published by Macmillan, is one of the biggest loads of rubbish that it has ever been my misfortune to read. An overly pretentious assemblage of clap-trap which doesn't even deserve shelf space. If this is what understanding Television and in particular *Doctor Who* in the 1980s is all about then there's little hope, even for a Time-lord! In fact it reminds me of the British Film Institute's comments on their library of fantasy film magazines: "... the trivia of today are the sociological worktools of tomorrow."

To round off this month I would like to make it absolutely clear that I do not hate Linda Thorson. That may come as a bit of a surprise as I'm constantly accused of criticising her. Unfortunately Miss Thorson is a very hard Lady to pin down and if you want to find out more about her I suggest a letter to Stephen & Joy Curry, 39 Guildford Park Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5NA requesting a copy of the American Avengers magazine *With Umbrella, Charm and Bowler*, Vol I No. 6. It has all you need to know about Tara King and more. But to prove that I'm doing my bit here's some information from *Who's Who on Television* published in 1970 by ITV books. "Linda Thorson born Toronto Canada. Secretary in father's confectionary business. Juvenile ice skating champion. Came to London to study at RADA. Left with honours diploma, voice scholarship (soprano), also studied ballet and piano. Used to live in St. John's Wood, London. She married at 16 and was divorced in 1970. Starsign: Gemini. Hobbies include, riding, water-skiing, and ice-skating."



THE (Dino) SAURUS



Feature by Leslie Ford

Men has always been fascinated by his own pre-history and earlier. Like all the popular arts, the movies have reflected this interest, almost since the beginning of the medium itself.

One particular aspect of this fascination is with the dinosaur and while there is only the vaguest of proof that man may have co-existed with these great beasts, the fertile imaginations of screenwriters have completely ignored this fact. Another popular trend has been the mixing of primordial creatures with modern man.

There are a few guidelines to note before proceeding to the checklist. Firstly, I have only concerned myself with films in which a prehistoric (either real or imaginary) creature appears. As early as 1912 D.W. Griffith was using prehistoric man for his dramas, like *Men's Genesis*, although it contained no dinosaurs. Consequently, you'll not find such pictures as *Creatures the World Forgot* (1971) listed, unless you consider the sight of Julie Ege wrestling a python worthy of constituting an entry—the python, that is.

You'll also notice that stock footage from the 1940 *One Million B.C.* turns up with monotonous regularity. Apologies aside, you'll be pleased to know that this isn't a complete listing of the use of this celluloid. I've only noted the more exceptional cases, although there are more and it's turned up in assorted TV shows.

I'm also sure that the sharp-eyed of you will note the lack of a single *Godzilla*-type Japanese films. True, the majority of the city-stompers featured in these movies are indeed prehistoric but, for the most part, completely imaginary or at best myth-based. Besides, it would take just about a whole issue of *Starburst* to simply list the films alone with the U.S. variations and the multitude of alternate titles. But I'm sure we'll get around to them eventually.

Also missing is any mention of cel-animated dinosaurs. Once again space limitations preclude their inclusion, although it should be mentioned that Windsor McCaye's *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1912) appears to be the first film realization of a dinosaur in the movies and what's more, good old Gertie was the first character created specifically for the animated motion picture medium.

1914

UNTITLED: Willis O'Brien made a short trick film using stop-motion animation featuring an *Apatosaurus*.

BRUTE FORCE: A one-reeler directed by D.W. Griffith. Featured a horned flesh eater (*Ceratops*) and was a sequel to the dinosaur-less *Men's Genesis* of 1912. 30 mins.

Your Guide to Prehistory in the Movies



1915

THE DINOSAUR AND THE MISSING LINK: O'Brien expended his trick film of the previous year for producer Herman Wobber who sold it to Thomas A. Edison's releasing company who then put it on the shelf till 1917. Contained a giant flightless bird called a Dinonis as well as a Brontoseurus.⁶ 5 mins.

1916

BIRTH OF A FLIVVER: Another stop-motion short from Willis O'Brien containing a Brontoseurus.

1917:

MORPHEUS MIKE/I.R.F.D. 10,000/PREHISTORIC POULTRY: Three more stop-motion shorts by O'Brien, made for his company

Conquest Pictures but released through Edison.

THE GHOST OF SLUMBER MOUNTAIN: Willis O'Brien's first real stop-motion classic. The movie was produced by Herbert M. Dawley for World Cinema Distributing Co. O'Brien animated several prehistoric creatures including a flightless bird (Diamityra) which featured on the poster art, two Triceratops and an Allosaurus. After legal wrangles (part of which were Dawley's claims that he had created the dinosaurs by using giant mechanical models!) the film was finally cut and released to great popular success in 1919.

1919

ADAM RAISES CAIN: A silhouette puppet film by Tony Serg featuring an imaginary dinosaur.



1920

ALONG THE MOONBEAM TRAIL: Another Herbert M. Dawley picture which contained out-takes from *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain*.

1923

EVOLUTION: Contained stock footage from *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain*. 52 mins.
THE THREE AGES: Early Buster Keaton silent comedy set partly in prehistoric times featured an animated Brontoseurus. Directed by Buster Keaton. 70 mins.

1925

THE LOST WORLD: Full-blooded adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's splendid adventure novel. Willis O'Brien animated a whole

menagerie of prehistoric creatures. It's a little on the long side at 110 minutes and there are occasional *longeurs* in Harry O. Hoyt's direction, but overall the First National release is great fun. Starring: Bessie Love, Wallace Beery, Lewis Stone. Remade in 1960 (q.v.).

1926

FIG LEAVES: This early Howard Hawks comedy featured a prologue with Adam and Eve and a Brontosaurus. A full size model, it was moved around on wheels. Designed by William Cameron Menzies. Starring: George O'Brien. 80 mins.

1927

FLYING ELEPHANTS: Silent Laurel and Hardy short which contained a Triceratops – actually two men in a suit. Directed by Frank Butler. 22 mins.

1930/31

CREATION: A film being developed by Willis O'Brien at RKO which was shelved in pre-production when cuts hit the studio. The project lay dormant until David O. Selznick joined the company and saw the possibilities in O'Brien's techniques. Two years later came the result – *King Kong*!

1931

MYSTERY OF LIFE: This 62 minute Universal documentary contained stock footage from *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain*.

1933

KING KONG: Still unsurpassed as the greatest "Monster" movie of all time. O'Brien, now with sound and improved animation techniques at his disposal, created an adventure thriller *par excellence* which elicited crowd responses the like of which wouldn't be seen again until *Jaws* and *Star Wars*. Among many animation highlights, perhaps the most outstanding is Kong's battle with a Tyrannosaurus. Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack and Merian C. Cooper, based on an original story by Cooper and Edgar Wallace and a screenplay by James Creelman and Ruth Rose. Starring Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong and Bruce Cabot. 100 mins.

SON OF KONG: Quick cash-in sequel to *The Big One*. Somewhat short on real dinosaurs, although O'Brien's animation is as fluid and dynamic as before. Overall light serio-comic tone and short running time, rightfully relegates this to B-movie status. Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack. Starring Robert Armstrong. 70 mins.

1938

EVOLUTION: Over a two year period some test footage was shot, but this Ray Harryhausen dinosaur project was never made although *The Animal World* (1955) had some similarities to the animators ideas.

1939

WAR EAGLES: One of the most intriguing 'never filmed' movies. Willis O'Brien's story mixed a tribe of ancient Vikings in a lost valley, who ride giant eagles amid the peaks. It was also to contain an Allosaurus and an airborne battle between Pteranodons and the title birds.

1940

ONE MILLION B.C.: This United Artists release was originally to be directed by D.W. Griffith but was ultimately helmed by Hal Roach and Hal Roach Jr. although the silent screen master may have shot some scenes. The movie is pretty dull stuff today with Victor

Mature making an unlikely hero and Lon Chaney Jr. as the bad guy. Fred Knott constructed some variable dinosaur suits, including one for a pig to wear! Also contains some dressed-up lizards and an above average earthquake. It was released in U.K. as *Man and His Mate* and later reissued as *The Cave Man*. 80 mins.

1942

GWANGI: A Willis O'Brien project which was to mix cowboys and prehistoric creatures. Models were made and some test footage shot, but the project was scrapped. A variation of the story in a script by Bill Bast and animation by Ray Harryhausen was made in 1968.

1943

TARZAN'S DESERT MYSTERY: No mystery here, the "dinosaurs" in this clinker were stock footage from *One Million B.C.* Directed by William Thiele. Starring: Johnny Weissmuller, Otto Krieger. 70 mins.

1948

SUPERMAN: The Kirk Alyn serial featured stock footage from *One Million B.C.* Directed by Spencer G. Bennett/Thomas Carr. 15 episodes/88 minute feature.

UNKNOWN ISLAND: A Film Classics Cinecolour production. More sub-*Lost World*, though this time the setting is an island where time has stood still. Assorted men-in-suits and on wheels dinosaurs, including a Tyrannosaurus, Dimetrodon and a brontosaurus. Directed by Jack Bernhard. 76 mins.

1950

PREHISTORIC WOMEN: A Cinecolour B movie with little to recommend it other than some elephants disguised as woolly Mammoths. *Quest For Fire* did it better. Directed by Greg Tallas. 70 mins.

TWO LOST WORLDS: Dull direction by Norman Dawn and wooden leading man James Arness make suitable showcase for more stock footage courtesy of *One Million B.C.* Directed by Norman Dawn. Starring: James Arness, Gloria Petrov. 62 mins.

1951

JUNGLE MANHUNT: A Johnny Weissmuller *Jungle Jim* featurette (probably later cannibalised into the tv series) which had stock footage from *One Million B.C.* Directed by Lew Landers. 66 mins.

THE LOST CONTINENT: Reworking of the *Lost World* formula with Cesar Romero and some dressed-up lizards keeping each other



Above: A gripping scene from *The Beast of Hollow Mountain* (1956). Inset: Ray Harryhausen's animated *Beast* from *20,000 Fathoms*. Below: A dinosaur fight from *The Animal World*, devised by Willis O'Brien and executed by Harryhausen.



company on another lost plateau. Real grade-Z entertainment. Directed by Sam Newfield. 82 mins.

1952

THE JUNGLE: Rod Cameron and Cesar Romero encounter some Mammoths while hunting in India in this low budget Lippert release. Directed by William Berke. 74 mins.
UNTAMED WOMEN: Well, a little bit. Cheapskate shennanigans with stock footage from the now over-exposed *One Million B.C.* Directed by W. Merle Connell. 70 mins.

1953

BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS: Early Ray Harryhausen monster epic featured a Rhedosaurus. Great fun despite the Poverty Row budget. One great scene as the creature destroys a lighthouse in silhouette. 80 mins.
ROBOT MONSTER: Phil Tucker's (now lauded) Golden Turkey, which apart from having an alien in a gorilla suit and diving helmet, also sported some stock footage from *One Million B.C.* 63 mins.

1954

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON: From the Devonian Age came the Gill Man – an imaginary missing link – in 3D yet! Directed by Jack Arnold. Produced by William Alland. 79 mins.

1955

THE ANIMAL WORLD: An early Irwin Allen documentary most notable for a ten minute stop-motion animation sequence devised by Willis O'Brien and executed by Ray Harryhausen. The scenes contained many dinosaurs and in part recalled Obie's work on the silent *The Lost World*. 82 mins.
KING DINOSAUR: Third rate SF actioner whose title star is actually stock footage from *One Million B.C.* and a dressed-up iguana! Directed by Bert I. Gordon. 63 mins.
PANTHER GIRL OF THE KONGO: False advertising! The poster for this end-of-the-line serial featured a dinosaur from *The Lost Continent*, but it was nowhere to be found in the chapter play itself. 12 episodes.
REVENGE OF THE CREATURE: The 3D Gill Man comes to town in this cheaper sequel. Directed by Jack Arnold. Starring: John Agar, Lori Nelson. 82 mins.

1956

BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN: An interesting concept (Allosaurus vs Cowboys) but dully directed with the flesh eater only appearing (courtesy of Jack Rabin's special effects) in the last few minutes. Plot owes something to Willis O'Brien's unfilmed *Gwangi* and the whole idea was much better handled in *Valley of Gwangi*. 77 mins.

1957

THE LAND UNKNOWN: A cut-rate *Lost World* feature from Universal-International. The men in dinosaur suits are about as entertaining as you'd expect and Virgil Vogel's direction is ... eh ... lack-lustre. Produced by William Alland. 78 mins.
MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD: Silly, silly! The monster was prehistoric and from the sea, but nothing more than an invention by scriptwriter Pat Fielder. 85 mins.
THE DEADLY MANTIS: The Universal-International monster formula marches, or rather buzzes on. The giant mantis is prehistoric, but imaginary. The special effects are terrible. Directed by Nathan Juran. 79 mins.
THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US: Last outing for the now Gill-less Man. Pretty bad. Produced by William Alland. 78 mins. ■



Above: The Deadly Mantis holds up the freeway. Below: A man-in-a-suit dinosaur chases the principals of *The Land Unknown* (1957).



Part Two of THE(Dino)SAURUS will appear next month.

INTERVIEW:



Interview by Alan Jones

The name of John Sayles should need no introduction to anybody even only remotely interested in the fantasy genre. The scripts he has written for *Piranha*, *Battle Beyond the Stars*, *The Howling* and *Alligator* should attest to that. Not to mention *The Lady in Red*, one of the best exploitation movies of the last five years, or *The Challenge*, that remarkably off-beat Oriental revenge saga.

More recently he has added directing to the list of his talents with *Return of the Secaucus Seven* (the original *Big Chill*) and *Lianna*, a moving portrait of a married woman's lesbian relationship with her night school teacher. Both of these films were low cost independent productions financed by Sayles himself in an effort to make the kind of films he believed in outside of the Hollywood mainstream. And it is a route he candidly admits he wants to pursue, especially after the battle scars he received over his latest release.

Baby It's You is a poignant and deeply felt journey through the 1960s by two ill-matched teenage lovers. Like all of Sayles' films it is well worth seeing – you'll never hear Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night" with the same ears again – but Paramount's treatment of it was considered so shabby that he was only too happy to quit the Directors Guild of America in order to make his new film.

The good news is that this just completed low budget production is a return to the genre that started his burgeoning cinematic career. But *The Brother From Another Planet* is the sci-fi/fantasy genre on Sayles' own terms and far removed from the exploitation industry that first brought his name to our attention.

I talked to John Sayles while he was visiting the London Film Festival to promote *Lianna*. And, with more than a little help from Tony Crawley, quite simply what follows are the edited highlights of John Sayles on . . . John Sayles.

MR WRITE

"I have been writing all my life. Writing courses didn't teach me anything. I learnt my technique mainly from reading I suppose. I write very fast – in cars, on scraps of paper, standing up – and I'm a good first draft writer. I don't revise. The most difficult thing for me to do involves the constructing of a movie script, especially transition. In a novel you start a new chapter. In a movie you have to find an acceptable time transition that keeps the structure flowing. Dialogue is very easy for me. In my novels (*Pride of the Bimbos*, *Union Dues*, *The Anarchist Convention*) I had to stop writing in the



Facing page: *The Howling*, scripted by John Sayles and directed by Joe Dante, featuring amazing werewolf make-up by Rob Bottin. Below: Two horrific scenes from *Piranha*.



first person because it was so easy for me to do. Everything began to turn into monologues which made it look like I had just been interviewing people. Writing in the third person is far more difficult but I find I have to write all the time.

CORMANIA

"I like all the aspects to making a motion picture. Editing is my favourite as that is the time when there is no real pressure and it is more like writing as you are working on the finished product whereas the

script was just a blueprint. Most of the actors in my films are friends that I simply write into the script and I appear sometimes mainly because when I write a script I play every part in my head which is why I think I make ordinary characters seem different. Some of it is a financial consideration of course as well but it is also a lot of fun. After playing a lead in *The Brother From Another Planet*, I acted in a movie I didn't write or direct called *Hard Choices*. I play a marijuana farmer. In the case of my role in *Lianna*, after I wrote the character he seemed a total jerk on the page. I wanted a partial-jerk and I had a better

idea how to play that than to direct or cast it with somebody else without it getting to be a total cartoon.

"I wrote a lot of scripts the moment I hit Hollywood so when people met me, I could always say I was working on something. I never got a job from a meeting but from people recognising who I was. Three months after I arrived in California my agent rang and said there was a rewrite on something called *Piranha* going the rounds and that if I wanted it, I could get it. The story editor at New World had read some of my work and liked it. Roger Corman

John Sayles

reputation of trying new people out – at a pittance admittedly – but others don't even bother to do that! It is a very good way to break into the industry without too much pressure because if a low budget exploiter turns out bad, the rest of the industry doesn't even know it. The opposite is true if you make a big studio picture. If it does nothing you are back to the minor league as it is a noticeable flop. Also if Corman pays you ten thousand dollars - he's going to make that movie. He doesn't develop anything that he doesn't make. *The Lady in Red* is the only movie I wrote for him that I wish I had been given the chance of directing. It was a very ambitious script and it has become very popular in Europe but has fared hopelessly in the U.S. where it has had two title changes *Bullets, Sin and Bathtup Gin and Kiss Me and Die*. It has never caught on properly because the gangster genre is as dead as a doornail.

"I would say my heart was in those scripts as much as my later more personal projects. I was always trying to do the best job I could. All those films were either Corman's ideas or ones that had been brought to him. Remember they were mostly rewrites in the sense that Corman would say 'Here's a title. *Piranha*. Keep it and the idea of the fish in the North American waters but throw everything else out.' And it was the same for *The Howling* and *Alligator*. The term used for scripts like that is 'grounduppers'. I have always tried to keep the respect of the genre intact and not turn it into camp. Basically I would update simple 1950s based ideas. In *Alligator* for example, you would now have a hard time getting close to the phenomena because of the media. The directors I worked with too, like Joe Dante and Lewis Teague, had a respect and liked those type of movies. The most important thing about all my early work is that the people making them weren't condescending and they weren't saying 'What sort of movie would those who are stupid enough to go like to see?' I must hold some sort of record for writing *The Challenge* in three days. Well, one draft of it anyway. I was brought in to rewrite it as it was originally all about Chinese people. I had to change it so that Scott Glenn would say yes to it on the Monday and it was Thursday of the week before! I revamped it in a hotel room in a solid block of three days and then went to sleep for two. I then got a call to go to Tokyo to do a five day rewrite to incorporate the fact that they found out Toshiro Mifune could do a lot more physically than they had anticipated. I also had to take out all the 'r's' in any of the Japanese dialogue and rephrase it as the actors found it impossible to speak. John Frank- enheimer was casting downstairs in the hotel and I would literally keep getting calls from him telling who did or didn't speak English so I would know what to do with all the individual lines. I also wrote three endings for *Piranha*, four for *Alligator* and a werewolf scene for *The Howling*. I have done that with a lot of films though, a happy, sad and ambiguous one so there would be a choice rather than regret another avenue should have been taken after the shooting has wrapped. The best ending I supplied for *Alligator* was never used because the 32 foot reptilian model was considered too good a publicity gimmick to destroy.

"I think I was lucky in just being able to write the movies and not have to direct them. I got what was the most fun and not having to deal with the negative aspects like the small budgets and the shooting time they had. Knowing how these films



stack up against other movies, I think they all turned out rather well. I was wincing sometimes more over scenes that got cut out mainly because they were nothing more than action sequences with 'Look out, here it comes!' type dialogue—the money and time insufficient to shoot them. I hear there is an *Alligator II* being planned and *The Howling II* which is definitely going to happen. But I'm not interested in sequels or remakes. I'm only interested in making pictures that aren't going to get made unless I, or somebody else who's independent, makes them. At one point I was asked to write *Cat People* at the time Roger Vadim was going to direct it.

NIGHT SKIES

"The proposed semi-sequel to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* I was involved with for a time called *Night Skies* was based on research that Steven Spielberg had done. He had found a story about some Kentucky farm folk who had been attacked by little malevolent aliens who seemed to be studying them. Of course the people concerned didn't really want to talk about it as they knew everybody would think they were crazy. Spielberg wanted to make a less benevolent *E.T.* type movie and explain some of the points raised in *Close Encounters* like how could these creatures with three fingers build a spaceship. He was set to produce it with Ron Cobb directing and after being given the basic premise I went off and wrote an alien *Drums Along the Mohawk* involving cattle mutilations and turned out a very scary movie. The ending involved the family's autistic son who the aliens want to take away and one friendly alien



who doesn't agree with this and is left behind. That was the last page of my script and of course it is almost the first page of the one for *E.T.* Rick Baker was involved with the mechanical effects but Columbia rejected his budget which involved inventing a lot of technology. Steven then had a similar row with Rick and promptly got involved with *Polltergeist*, which seems to me got the horror out of his system and then lost interest in *Night Skies*. I was sent the script of *E.T.* and like Ron Cobb, didn't think anything I had come up with had been used, so I declined a credit. It was fun while it lasted and it enabled me to get the initial funding on *Lianna*. *Night Skies* would have been a fun movie but it wouldn't have made nearly as much money as *E.T.* did.

INDEPENDENTS DAY

"I paid for the filming of my new picture, *The Brother From Another Planet*, with the money I got from the cable sales of *Return of the Secaucus Seven* and my writing fees from my adaptations of the two best-sellers *Clan of the Cave Bear* and *Valley of the Horses*. I suppose you could call them ▶



Toshiro Mifune as Yoshida in a dream sequence from *The Challenge*, a film written by John Sayles in three days. Donna Kei Benz and Scott Glenn pose for the poster art of *The Challenge*. Left: A close-up of Robert Picardo, the mad werewolf from *The Howling*. Above: Elizabeth Brooks as Eddie Quist's werewolf sister, Marsha. Below: John Sayle's Alligator drops in for a quick bite at a wedding party.



INTERVIEW:

John Sayles

revisionist pre-history. At first it was going to be a miniseries but now I hear Universal plan to film two features back to back in North Canada. I actually dreamed the idea for *The Brother From Another Planet* while I was making *Lianna* and *Baby It's You*. In my first dream I dreamt I was rewriting a movie for my friend Joe Dante called *Assholes From Outer Space* which was about alien used car dealers arriving on Earth and making our lives a misery. I thought about it after I woke up but reached the conclusion that the idea was really a sketch in some revue but not a movie. Then I had a second dream about directing a film noir version of *Big Foot* - you know, set in the city, shot in black and white, with a saxophone score - but when I woke up from that one I didn't think it was too hot even for a sketch. My third dream involved a black guy from another planet wandering around Harlem and that sounded so good to me that I sort of combined all three and wrote the script. I wrote it in a six day stint after that.

"While I was editing *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, I wrote two scripts just to stay 1000 dollars ahead of the rental on the editing machine. With *Brother* I have to come up with another 50,000 dollars to complete it. And that isn't easy to find even in this business. But I figure, if I'm not willing to put money into my own projects, why should anyone else?

"We shot mainly at night on location in Hoboken, Times Square, Wall Street and Ellis Island as well as Harlem. Shooting in Harlem was really nice, people seemed genuinely interested in what we were doing



Left: The irrepressible Sybil Danning as St. Exmin, the voluptuous Valkyrie warrior who loves nothing more than a fight to the death. The opportunity to defend Akir from the evil warlord Sador, marks the ultimate test of her skills in John Sayle's *Battle Beyond the Stars*. Below: George Peppard as an eccentric character known as Cowboy. Right: Two more scenes from *Battle Beyond the Stars*, featuring Darlenne Flugel as the young, beautiful and brilliant computer specialist, Nenelle. She falls in love with Shad and joins him in his defense of Akir.



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and we weren't a big enough crew for them to think we had any money or hustle us. Shooting in New York is such a drag logistically speaking. The bureaucracy you have to go through just to get permission to shoot on the subways! We shot a lot of film without sound as I wrote the lead as not having vocal chords purposely so we could make film quickly. That way we didn't have to worry about the large loud crowds that seem to congregate when you are shooting a film in the city. Not only doesn't the alien speak but he also has low-budget powers. He can heal himself, self regenerate, grow back limbs and because he is telepathic he gets the vibes off all the ethnic minorities that exist in New York so he can understand everything. Joe Morton, a TV soap-opera actor, plays the alien who is chased by bounty hunters, myself and David Stathairn, when his spaceship crashes on Ellis Island. He gets involved in tracking a drug ring to Wall Street and he turns out to be a slave on the run in the galaxy. It is a very funny film but underlying that it is also very serious. I hope the film will be ready by March so we can open it in Manhattan.

"When I write any movie it has to be something I would want to see myself. That is why I don't do *Psycho* movies. I basically like to skirt the genres as there is room for every different type of film - pure entertainment where you have to look pretty hard for the substance or short stories that are made with serious intent for a limited audience. The spectrum between those two is enormous. Except for *The Challenge* nothing I have written has ever lost money. *The Lady in Red* just broke even. Out of everything I have done I have to say my favourite is *Lianna* because it was the hardest to get made. Otherwise I usually make a separate peace with something. Getting *Lianna* made - and seen - was my biggest triumph."

IN THE FABULOUS JUNE ISSUE . . .

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Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Tracy — Off!

John Landis couldn't lick it. Walter Hill has given up. And now, actor-turned-director Richard Benjamin has also seen the *Dick Tracy* film idea blow up in his face. Money is the root of the problem. No one could find a way to keep the budget under \$14 million — still high considering the current Hollywood average budget is around \$11.6m. Benjamin can put all his 1930s research to good use though. He's succeeding Blake Edwards as director of the Burt Reynolds-Clint Eastwood movie which Blake called *Kansas City Jazz* and then *Kansas City Blues* and which now, probably because of co-stars like Marsha Mason, luscious Clio Goldsmith and Irene Cara, is now known as *City Heat*.

Lift-Off

I hate to say I told you so (hah!), but hell... I told you so! About *The Lift*, I mean. I discovered Dick Maas' splendid Dutch chiller at Cannes last year. Lousy Americanised dubbing hasn't helped it in Britain, I know. But it lately won the top prize at the dozzenth fantasy festival at Avoriaz, on the French ski-slopes. I love to see a little film like this pull off something of a *Rocky* triumph against such heavyweight entries as *Brainstorm*, *The Day After*, *Christine* and both *Twilight Zone* and *Dead Zone*.

Director John Frankenheimer's jury went double-Dutch, in fact, providing an extra "special" award to Paul Verhoeven's *The Fourth Man*. Without over-doing it, the way Fleet Street does after our Oscar wins, I have to agree that Holland is a country to watch. A tiny industry, sure, but highly talented. Where else did Sylvia Kristel and Rutger Hauer from from? Hauer's back in Amsterdam now, by the way, giving some more Paul Verhoeven projects an international boost with his *Blade Running* name.

Battle — On

Fantasy (or any other) festival prizes do not guarantee a hit, however. The big Avoriaz winner last year was French (for once) and I even recommended Luc Besson's *The Last Battle* to you as the *Diva* of '83 — in terms of its considerable brilliance from a first-time director. Luc went on to take top prizes at nearly every other fantasy fest his film was invited to. But in France, the movie didn't make many box-office waves. The French Academy remembered it though and nominated Luc for one of the Gallic Oscars — the Cesar for

Best First Film. That got the show back on the road in a snappy re-issue. Alas, Luc did not win the Cesar. He is winning audiences though, and the film should be in Britain soon. There'll be no rubbishy dubbing with this one. It has no dialogue — his characters are mute after the holocaust. Meanwhile, Luc is after Charlotte Rampling and Sting for his new thrill, *Subway*.

Cold Shoulder

Big shock of the Avoriaz event was not the lousy weather or the extra, 95-seater mobile cinema to help with the

overflow crowds, but the juries' utter rejection, not so much as a blink, never mind a nod, to John Carpenter. After all, he's the festival's second only favourite son, after Steven Spielberg. Even the assembled, freezing critics, who have twice given John their prize in the past, cold-shouldered his excellent *Christine*, in favour of David Cronenberg's more fervid Stephen King exercise, *Dead Zone*.

Raiders vs Tootsie

After the *Octopussy* vs *Never Say Never* Again update, here's the latest on

the big *Raiders* vs *Tootsie* video battle in America. Paramount claim that *Raiders* has sold 785,000 copies around the world — and should hit a million before the year of the year. Columbia, on the other hand, say that *Tootsie* is generating more money. Well, that's possible as Paramount accountants work it out, *Raiders* is selling 40 times as many copies as *Tootsie*, but earning only 5½ times as much... Paramount are the real winners, whichever way you look at the battle. Their *Raiders* tape has a trailer for *Temple of Doom* on the end of it. Columbia has no plans for a *Tootsie II*. Not yet, anyway.



Top: John Stockwell and Keith Gordon in John Carpenter's *Christine*. Top right: Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones in a scene from *Raiders*, Paramount's top-selling video. Above: Post-Holocaust, Pierre Jolivet is the loner, surviving life after *The Bomb*, in Luc Besson's great French movie *Le Dernier Combat* — *The Last Battle*. Not to be missed... on video or screen.



Lights...!

Hollywood spending 1.7 billion dollars on movies this year. More than ever; more money and more movies. In '82, they made 116 films over yonder; 127 last year. Should hit 150 this twelvemonth... Here's some of 'em... John Badham starts lensing American Flyer down Colorado way in May, from a script by Steve Tesich, the *Breaking Away*/Eyewitness fella... Brian De Palma chose *Ghost Story*'s Craig Wasson (one of Tesich's *Four Friends*) Greg Henry, Michael Kearns and Tippi Hedren's kid, Melanie Griffith, for his *Body Double* chiller... Mrs De Palma, aka Nancy Allen, is otherwise engaged, you see, in Carpenter's production of *The Philadelphia Experiment* with Michael Paré, from Walter Hill's *Street Of Fire*... Carrie's Mum, Piper Laurie, score 25 films not out with her return to Oz assignment in London... Vincent Price supplying a voice-over for a cartoon called, no kidding, I Go Pogo... Dario Argento finally fixed an American release and video deal for *Tenebrae*. Only taken him two years...

Trek of the Month

And Paramount continues to go where no video-man has gone before by planning a direct-mail offer of all 78 episodes of the 1966-68 *Star Trek* TV series. Yeah, the whole damn shooting-match, for as little as around £12 an episode.

Some years ago, Paramount issued two episodes on tape with no vast success. The price was high then. The fans dug the shows. The video outlets did not. This time around, Paramount has cut out the middle man. You buy direct from the studio, or its allocated facility, in a Trek of the Month club idea.

Just think if you start with Marc Daniel's *The Man Trap* now, which was the first aired on NBC in 1966 — or perhaps with Marc Daniels' *The Menagerie*, which is the Hugo Award winning two-parter, including Robert Butler's original pilot film, *The Cage*, with Jeffrey Hunter as the original Kirk (re-named Pike), then you'll be due for Herb Wallerstein's *Turnabout Murder* finale in six-and-a-half years time! And if so, I hope we'll still be here for you to write in and boast about having the lot!



Camera . . .

Dawning fans will love to know *Sybil*'s in two of those 150 US films this year; at least, two. After *Playing With Fire* for rising writer-producer-director Howard Avedis, *Sybil*'s joining ex-Batman Adam West in *Young Lady Chatterley*

ll... Not that young as it's the same Lady C. Harlee McBride, from the 1976 original... Which reminds me that 007-scripter Tom Mankiewicz (or was it D.H. Lawrence?) is latest scribe aboard the Batman movie script... These definitive versions are so trouble-

some. Greystoke lost as much as 25 minutes between recent American sneak previews... At least it's out and not sold off to cable-TV as recent rumours suggested... Paul Morrissey's *Alphabet City* loses lustre, don't you think, as (ugh!) New York, Avenue D...

Hitch Flair

Delighted to see the revived Hitchcock films doing so well — and all around the world. (They're being introduced at yet another fantasy festival — in Madrid. Spain had never seen *Rope* as Franco banned it in 1948). If nothing else, the films prove how far ahead of the pack Hitch always was. Look at the Saul Bass titles in *Vertigo*, almost as good as anything in *Tron*'s grids, and minus computers. Then again look at his casts. *Vertigo* has *Dallas*' Miss Ellie, Barbara Bel Geddes, and *Dynasty*'s John Forsythe is the top star of *The Trouble With Harry*. Look again at the interior set of Kim Novak's hotel in *Vertigo*. ... looked like Mrs Bates' place in *Psycho*, to me. Only two years separate the films, made in the same studio. Different art directors, admittedly but a set saved is more than a dollar saved. ...

Coming your way soon, by the way (or I hope it is) is a revised version of François Truffaut's definitive interview book with Hitchcock. It's been out in France for some months (published by Editions de Ramsay) and has more and better photos than the 1966 original, and, naturally, Truffaut has brought it up to date, detailing all of Hitchcock's films since what was always called his 50th, *Torn Curtain* in 1966. Hitch's daughter was given a copy during her French trip and loved Truffaut's opening: "Alfred Hitchcock made 53 films and one daughter. I dedicate this book to Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell."

I still maintain that Hitch made 54 films, but no matter. I'm not arguing with Truffaut. He's kindly provided a preface for the French edition of my Spielberg book. Merci, François! ■



Top: Captain Kirk (William Shatner) contemplates ordering a complete collection of *Star Trek* episodes, soon to be available on video from Paramount. Above: Hey, hey, we're the monkeys. A young Tarzan (Eric Langlois), with his Uncle perhaps, in *Greystoke*.

Starburst Review Section



THE DEAD ZONE



The *Dead Zone* is a sickly produced thriller based on Stephen King's best seller. As with most King-novels-into-movies, the major problem in the adaptation is the compression of a mass of characters and events into the framework of a two hour format. For the most part, such telescoping has proved a success, thanks to a neatly written screenplay by Jeffrey Boam. But sadly, for the most part, *The Dead Zone* is a leaden and often dull experience.

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of *The Dead Zone* is that it carries the name of David Cronenberg as director. In the past, Cronenberg's films (all self-written other than *Fast Company*, a little seen drag racing exploiter) have displayed an intensely personal vision, and while not being to everybody's taste have marked the Canadian film maker as one of cinema's few genuine originals. Indeed the most damning comment one could make about *The Dead Zone* is that it looks like it could have been directed by anyone.

While Cronenberg makes all the right moves with his camera and is generally well served by his cast, at the heart of *The Dead Zone*'s dullness is a wooden performance by Christopher Walken as Johnny

"For a Cronenberg film, it's short on shock value."

**A Starburst Film Review
by Phil Edwards**

Smith, a man with precognitive powers following a five year long coma – the result of a car accident. Much of the problem is that Walken is almost constantly on screen and, while I'm sure that a man in his situation is going to feel a little remote, acting remote doesn't really convey anything.

For a Cronenberg film, *The Dead Zone* is short on shock value and the one really gruesome scene, involving a pair of scissors in the mouth, looks more like a piece of gratuitous grue left over from *Halloween 2* – another Dino de Laurentiis/Debra Hill production.

On the plus side, however, there's an outstandingly edited sequence in which Johnny 'sees' a child trapped in a burning house – the first of several such visions and a grandstand performance from Martin Sheen as Greg Stillson, the sleazy politician that

Johnny knows will one day press the button which heralds the apocalypse.

But overall, *The Dead Zone* remains a dissatisfying experience. It's a feature that engenders the feeling that there have been many hands at work – a horse designed by a committee. I for one, look forward to the next real David Cronenberg movie.

THE DEAD ZONE

Starring: Christopher Walken (as Johnny Smith), Brooke Adams (Sarah Bracknell), Tom Skerritt (Sheriff Bannerman), Herbert Lom (Dr Sam Weizak), Anthony Zerbe (Roger Stuart), Colleen Dewhurst (Henrietta Dodd), Martin Sheen (Greg Stillson), Nicholas Campbell (Frank Dodd), Sean Sullivan (Herb Smith), Jackie Burroughs (Vera Smith), Geza Kovacs (Sonny Elliman).

Directed by David Cronenberg, **Screenplay by** Jeffrey Boam based on the novel by Stephen King, **Photographed by** Mark Irwin, **Production design by** Carol Spier, **Edited by** Ronald Sanders, **Music by** Michael Kamen, **Special effects coordinated by** John Belyeu, **Produced by** Debra Hill.

Time: 103 mins

Cert: 18

Dare I suggest that Tony Crawley's admiration for (and acquaintance with) director Walerian Borowczyk accounts for his indulgence for *Blood Bath of Dr Jekyll* (now issued by VTC)? If so, I have to record a strongly dissenting vote. Despite the usual stylish visuals (the lighting effects reminiscent of Vermeer – a point underlined by the appearance in the film of an actual canvas by the Flemish Master, Borowczyk's film is, sadly, a total farrago – the "tongue-in-cheek" element mentioned in Tony's recent interview with the director (in *Starburst 40*) far less funny than the unintentional humour (such as the execrable dubbing – a character remarks to Hyde as he's energetically twisting the leg off an elderly lady: "I'll thank you to stop that"!); Hyde's murderous assaults come across like a Feydeau farce (apparently the director's intention!) and Patrick Magee (undubbed, of course, in one of his last roles) makes some of his earlier performances look like masterpieces of restraint. Alan Jones informs me that this version is cut, but it's hard to feel that damage has been done to this desperately ill-conceived effort.

JAPANESE JAPES

The supernatural elements in two samurai offerings from VTC, *Ninja Wars* and *Samurai Reincarnation* are handled with a genuine imaginative charge – and the first film, in particular, cleverly mixes tongue-in-cheek occultism (as well as the customary impossible leaps, characters have even a *Superman*-like power of flight!) with a stunning visual style, reminiscent of the marvellous Kurosawa. *Samurai Reincarnation* is, incidentally, a kind of "undead" re-play of the Master's *Seven Samurai*, with the recruiting of several moribund (or even dead!) warriors for a sword-wielding mission of death. While not rising to the delirious inspiration of *Ninja Wars*, several pleasing concepts abound. I'll draw a discreet veil over the dubbing of both films!

BUT IS IT ART?

Directed by Waris Hussein, an ITC release called *The Possession of Joel Delaney* is a social concern film masquerading as a horror film – or vice versa. Shirley MacLaine plays a rich New Yorker struggling to save her brother (Perry King) from being taken over by the personality of a dead Puerto Rican (who also happens to be a psychotic killer). Great play is made of the contrast between the uncaring life-style of the MacLaine character ("I know poverty exists, but you don't have to seek it out!") and her more concerned brother (who chooses a ghetto flat over more comfortable surroundings), and it's debatable whether or not the film manages the shift to more conventional horror-trappings; in fact, when Joel begins leaving se-

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by
Barry Forshaw



Above: Ash (Ian Holm) angrily pulls Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) away from the master computer in *Alien* (20th Century-Fox). Below: A scene from *Peter Walker's House of Whipcord* (now available on Derenn).



DON'T LEAVE IT TO CHANCE



HITS

1. *Capricorn One* (Precision)
2. *Creeping Flesh* (Videomedia)
3. *Alien* (20th Century-Fox)
4. *House of Whipcord* (Derenn)
5. *I Walked With a Zombie* (Kingston)



PITS

1. *Demons of Ludlow* (Precision)
2. *The Outing* (VTC)
3. *Madman* (Video Film Org.)
4. *Crucible of Terror* (Home Video)
5. *Devil's Men* (Magnetic)
6. *Blood Orgy of the She Devils* (VCL)

vered heads around as signs of his personality shift, Hussein succeeds fairly well in generating a growing unease, and the climax is gripping stuff, where's the film's symbolic clash between the haves and have-nots finds frightening expression. Finally though, less a film for horror-buffs than for those seeking a fairly taut psychological drama.

AND NOW, 4D!

The 4D Man, once available in Britain in a Super-8 mm print under the clumsy title *Master of Terror*, is a science fiction curiosity from Irwin S. Yeaworth, director of *The Blob* (hardly an inspiring credential for any film!). It does, however, have the occasional moment where the "sense of wonder" is evoked.

After an interminable love triangle (over a third of the film's running time) is mullied over, the film's anti-hero (a scientist played by Robert Lansing) accidentally gains his ability to move through solid objects – bank walls, doors, even people (the latter tend to wither and perish after the process, unfortunately). The effects in these latter scenes are striking by late 50s standards – you may find yourself using the fast-forward button to get to them, though.

THE PETER WALKER SECTION

Derann Video have done genre enthusiasts a favour by making available again some of the films of Peter Walker, Britain's most interesting horror film director. *Frightmare* is unquestionably his most totally achieved film, successful on every level – as a grisly shocker (including a grimly wielded Black and Decker!), as a well constructed plot (with all the characters – even minor ones – given a fully realised "life") and, mainly, as a showcase for the splendid Sheila Keith, so often the sinister centre of Walker's films.

Here she positively rivets the attention as the psychotic step-mother of the heroine, released from an institution after some ghastly crime (which I won't reveal!) and quickly reverting to her old ways – dispatching gullible young girls at Tarot card sessions with red-hot poker. Keith's portrait of barely controlled madness combined with whimpering insecurity cleverly walks a tightrope between over-the-top barnstorming and acting of real authority, while Walker plays out his ingenious plot with timing, skill, and not a few really jolting shocks. Picture quality is much better than the film's original video incarnation.

Derann have also re-issued Walker's powerful *House of Whipcord* (a clever critique of the more extreme members of the "Moral Majority" in our society – a favourite theme of Walker's) and I hope to cover this along with other Walker titles on video at a future date. I've already discussed *The Confession*

al Murders (aka, *House of Mortal Sin*), and we still have *Schizo*, *The Flesh and Blood Show* and *Die Screaming Marianne* to look in to (the latter among Derann's recent Pete Walker issues – a tyro effort, forgettable but for a few Walker themes making their first appearance, as Alan Jones points out in an earlier *Starburst*.)

BUT IS IT HORROR?

It's rare indeed for a nominally "horror" film to be applauded by mainstream critics as a minor classic of film art (*Psycho* being the obvious winner) but Roman Polanski's first English film *Repulsion* (Warner) has rightly been recognised as a subtle, intelligent and terrifying portrait of a young girl's descent into schizophrenia and murder. Catherine Deneuve's playing is superb in its beneath-the-surface shadings, and Polanski treats the incidental details of her madness (a putrefying rabbit left on a plate, the attraction/repulsion of a man's vest left in the bathroom) with as much skill as the frightening assaults with razor and candlestick. Absolutely not to be missed.

PLUMBING THE SEWERS

Alligator (Intervision) is proof that John Sayles, rather than whichever director is filming his scripts, is the real auteur of his films. Here, a simple *Jaws* rip-off, while not starting particularly promisingly, is gradually transformed into something quite witty and accomplished. The monstrous alligator of the title, after being flushed down a loo as a baby (the hoariest of New York folk tales) devours laboratory treated offal which causes striking growth. But while the earlier scenes of the creature menacing scruffy cop Robert Forster in the sewers (to a pseudo John Williams score) are conventional, the final eruption through the streets – and finally into an elegant wedding party – functions excitingly on the levels of both horror and humour. Even the climax – with a final Spielberg lift – is edited with pulse-racing precision.

Characterisation is typical Sayles – rich and eccentric. Forster's born-loser cop is acted as well as it is written and boosts an already engaging little film. The director is Lewis Teague.

BIG BIRD

Because Larry Cohen continues to concentrate on the characters in his genre films even more than the special effects mayhem, a movie like *Q – The Winged Serpent* (Hokushin Video) becomes far more interesting than the plot synopsis might suggest (the murderous Aztec God of the title using various inhabitants of New York as *hors d'oeuvres* before being routed by dogged cop David Carradine).

Here, for instance, the whining small-time crook, beautifully played by

Michael Moriarty, who finds the monstrous egg and skyscraper lair of *Q*, ensures that the plot isn't just a stringing together of the various animation sequences. These are sparingly and

excellently done by David Allen and associates, and ensure (together with Cohen's usual sub-plots involving the chicaneries of authority) an imaginative and unusual video experience.



Above: Catherine Deneuve in Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (Warner). Below: James Woods and Deborah Harry in David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*, released by CIC video with cuts. Bottom: Bette Davis as *The Watcher in the Woods* (Disney).



FAMILIAR GROUND

Butcher, Baker, Nightmare Maker is the title on the credits of an AVP print of a film that has become merely *Nightmare Maker* on the packaging; despite a credibly neurotic portrayal by Susan Tyrrell as a woman sexually obsessed with her teenage nephew, William Asher's film is standard stuff. Some tension is generated in the final reel – but it seems that the heroes and heroines of horror films have not seen *Halloween* – don't they realise that upkeen knife wounds hardly faze the average movie psychopath?

BRIEF NOTES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer Barry Forshaw
Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things (Intervision) stars and features make-up by Allen Ormsby – but I don't doubt that Ormsby passionately wishes that this more contemporary clone of *Night of the Living Dead* were consigned to oblivion. Director is Benjamin Clark. This dismal effort reminds one that...

Night of the Living Dead (Intervision) is second only to *Psycho* in the number of clones it has inspired; the video catches some but not all of the films claustrophobic cinema tension, but it's regrettable that the heavily censored British release print was chosen for video release.

And, speaking of cuts:
As with *Maniac*, virtually all Tom Savini's graphic make-up effects have been removed from John Russo's *Midnight* (Alpha) and this *Texas Chainsaw* rip-off has little else to offer.

Demons of the Mind (Thorn EMI) is a Hammer title directed by Peter Sykes that occasionally glimmers with some of the visual style of the late Michael Reeves; but the plot (a sort of gothic re-working of *Forbidden Planet's* "monster from the Id" idea) is sabotaged by acting that is either overblown (Robert Hardy, Patrick Magee) or indifferent (Paul Jones, Gillian Hills).

Usually I'd simply mention something as appallingly bad as *Flesh Feast* (Intercity) in our "Pits" section – but some kind of lament is necessary for the sight of an ageing Veronica Lake reduced to dropping worms on a very badly acted Hitler. Avoid at all costs.

NEW RELEASES

From Disney, the much altered *Watcher in The Woods*; the other big pending video is CIC's *Videodrome*, sadly cut from its cinema release (the thin end of the wedge?). Palace has *Big Meat Eater*, while VTC has a double bill of *Nightmare City* and *Alien Terror*. Finally, from Guild, *Megaforce* and *Robbers of the Sacred Mountain*. ■

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles

Fresh ideas in science fiction seem to be pretty thin on the ground at the moment, but this doesn't mean that SF is lacking in excitement and interest. A lot of writers seem to be reworking familiar themes and motifs, with varying degrees of success. A good example of an old idea given a new treatment is *Fire in the Abyss* by Stuart Gordon (Arrow, £1.95) in which an historical character from the past is abruptly transported into our present. The involuntary time-traveller in this case is the Elizabethan explorer Sir Humphrey Gilbert, whose ship hits a kind of time-vortex which catapults him into 1984. Imprisoned in America with other Displaced Temporal Immigrants (DTIs) from various historical epochs, Sir Humphrey later escapes and after various adventures ensconces himself in a remote cottage in Wales where he recounts his story.

In terms of ideas, there's not much new on offer in this novel, but the author has done a lot of research on his central character, and it's skilfully embodied in the text. Sir Humphrey emerges as a likeable if impulsive fellow, complete with the particular prejudices of his age, and one of the underlying themes of the novel is that we're all products of our particular time with its various biases and preconceptions. At one point Sir Humphrey has difficulty in being friendly towards another DTI because he's Spanish – the Spanish being the hated enemy of all Englishmen during his day. But we have our own bogymen in the Russians, and I would have liked to see the author make more of such parallels. If the novel has a flaw, it's that it seemed rather long for its storyline, though I'd be hard pressed to say where cuts could have been made. There's no real plot as such, the story

recounting Sir Humphrey's struggle to come to terms with the brave new world in which he finds himself. The style is vigorous and discursive, with some splendid passages of writing when Humphrey waxes lyrical on the benefits of nature or the shortcomings of the human race. This is the kind of novel that won't be to everyone's taste, but Stuart Gordon is a real writer, and I hope this book does well for him.

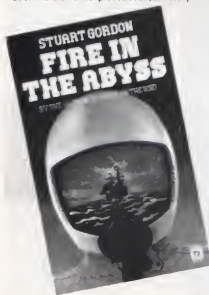
Empire of the East by Fred Saberhagen (Futura, £2.95) is a less ambitious undertaking altogether, despite puffs from the likes of Roger Zelazny, Larry Niven and Algis Budrys. It's a pretty straightforward adventure yarn set in a feudal future where magic is an effective force and only the rudiments of technology remain. The story centres around the discovery of a nuclear-powered battle-tank known as The Elephant, and there's much skirmishing and derring-do. Despite all this, the writing seemed curiously flat to me so that I never became engaged in the story. Saberhagen is no hack, but neither does he seem to possess any special talents which would lift his tale above the rut of the ordinary. Incidentally, the introduction by Larry Niven which is advertised on the cover was missing from my copy.

Demon-4 by David Mace (Granada, £1.50) is a promising first novel by a writer who is very much at home with technology but does not neglect his human characters. The *Demon-4* of the title is an undersea craft controlled by the brain of a man whose physical body has died and whose memories have been selectively erased to enable him to function in his new role. The craft is sent on a mission to destroy the automated fortress KRAK-1 which has resisted all attempts to deactivate it after a world war. On a trial run, the human pilot huddled

in the cramped confines of the *Demon* becomes convinced that the controlling intelligence is displaying personality traits beyond its programmed function, and he refuses to make a further trip in it. So a substitute pilot is drafted in, and the mission ends in both tragedy and triumph. *Demon-4* takes a while to get into its stride, and it lacks a satisfactory shape in the sense of having a strong central character around whom the events of the story constantly unfold; but it's good to encounter a new writer who is strong on the engineering and technical aspects of science fiction but is also interested in its human dimension. I look forward to his next novel with interest.

Also from Granada is *Psychomech* by Brian Lumley at £1.95, which is a sort of techno-horror thriller with mystical overtones. It involved an ex-Nazi who wishes to preserve his mind after death, a young British soldier who becomes his willing helper after being blinded by an IRA bomb, and a machine which can enhance the power of the human mind. Out of this melange of ingredients the author has constructed a serviceable story which creditably avoids clichéd set-pieces but somehow failed (for me at least) to deliver quite the impact promised. It also has its purple patches, as when "a leoprous grey mass of foaming, spawning cells issued from her body. She lay in a pool of heaving, living cancerous tissue". The author is at his best when he's most restrained and not trying to force the reader to retching point.

Superluminal by Vonda N. McIntyre (Gollancz, £8.95) is the third novel by a Nebula Award winner who always produces carefully crafted fiction, and I'm hard pressed to say why I wasn't really impressed by it since it's perfectly successful on its own terms. Perhaps it's because the novel is so unrelentingly science fictional and hence inward-looking. It's centred around the idea of starship pilots who are a breed apart from ordinary humans since only they can survive faster-than-light travel while conscious. What they experience during superluminal flight cannot be conveyed to ordinary mortals, and they are thus admired and envied by everyone else. Radu Dracul, a crewman who is rejected as a pilot, falls in love with Laenea Trevelyan, who has just become a pilot, and the story follows their star-crossed destinies after their abortive romance. Despite the thoughtfulness and skill which has gone into the writing, it seemed to me that the author remained unaware that her central metaphor is strongly sexual, and because of this lack of awareness *Superluminal* is, despite its surface sophistication, fundamentally a naive book, rigidly bound to genre considerations. ■



This year's Oscar nominations reflected the usual Hollywood overlook of the films that repeatedly make the industry the millions of dollars it needs to survive. I mean the fantasy, science fiction and horror films which now, as ever, draw the crowds to the box office window to buy those all-important tickets.

Taking *Variety's* A.M.P.A.S. nominations list as my cue, I scoured the bookshelves to search out books on Awards. Surprisingly, as books of lists seem so popular these days, there weren't that many to catch my eye. More important to *Starburst* readers, there was very little to discourage the view that horror and science fiction films never win awards (a popular but not altogether correct observation).

With the Oscars and British Academy Awards behind us, we all know what fates befell the leading contenders this year. Did *The Right Stuff* sweep the board? As I write, I would like to think it stood a good chance, being (apart from a bloody good film) the first fantasy/science fiction idea to make it into reality and our sense of History: The Impossible Achieved. But perhaps I'm pushing the outside of the genre envelope here. . . .

The Right Stuff aside, the usual categories proliferated. Best Sound, Best Sound Effects, Best Art Direction, Best Cinematography, Best Film Editing. . . But no major nominations - except Best Picture and Best Supporting Actor if you allow me *The Right Stuff*. (Oh, yes, dear old Johnnie Williams got nominated again for that same piece of music. . . must be some kind of record, that, if you'll pardon the pun.)

As Roy Pickard points out in one of his two books currently available on Awards and/or lists, the only performers to win Oscars for horror or science fiction/fantasy films were Fredric March in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1932, Best Actor) and Ruth Gordon in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968, Best Supporting Actress). And, even with *Star Wars*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Dr Strangelove*, *E.T.*, *The Exorcist* and *Jaws* all nominated, no horror or science fiction movie has ever scooped the coveted Best Picture award (in spite of the enormous financial successes of the above films).

To correct the balance a little, Roy Pickard (in *The Hamlyn Book of Horror and S.F. Movie Lists*, £1.95p) does list the Annual Science Fiction Awards, presented in Hollywood by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films since 1972. He goes even further afield in listing the awards (since 1973) at the Avoriaz Festival Du Film Fantastique and those of The Trieste International Festival of Science Fiction Films (since 1964).

Pickard is also the one who produced the other Hamlyn Paperback, *The Oscar Movies*, From A-Z (£1.75) - revised in 1982 - which is useful, but suffers to my mind from being listed alphabetically, rather than chronologically. Each film is therefore separate,

Film Book World

Reviews by Geoff Simm



Fleshdental This art-moderne lightning-bolt man from an Academy Awards ceremony in the 1930s is featured in *The Real Oscar* by Peter H. Brown.

and one has to resort to nine appendices to find out relevant details of any one year's awards.

One of my favourites on the subject, alas now out of print, is the American publication *The Real Oscar, The Story Behind The Academy Awards* (Arlington House) by Peter H. Brown. This is a rather enjoyable tome (worth updating and reprinting, I would have thought) which includes the scandal surrounding the gold statuette - as well as the inevitable lists - and a more penetrating study into the whys and wherefores of Oscarism, and what goes on backstage at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. For example, Peter H. Brown has this to say on the subject of *The Exorcist* (1973):

"Why did *The Exorcist* lose to a lesser work, *The Sting*? Critics asked the question then, and it seems more pressing now - after dozens of films have appeared as part of the genre created by the William Friedkin film. Now that the dust has settled, it appears that the movie was badly crippled by Warner Brothers' attempts to suppress the contributions of Mercedes McCambridge and the film's gore finished it off. 'I think that many voters were worried that the subject matter of the film might reflect poorly on American films as a whole,' says NBC's Rona Barrett. 'People just didn't want the movie to be representative of Hollywood.'"

Oscar voters are also late in picking up on fresh trends or genres - a decades-old condition: this is the Academy of course, that failed to even nominate King Kong, *Singin' in the Rain* and *Things To Come*.

Warners, it turns out, were protecting Linda Blair, hoping for a *Best Supporting Actress* award and in favour of overlooking the uncredited work of Miss McCambridge on the movie. But word leaked out: Miss Blair's performance was not quite of her own making - and the award went to Tatum O'Neal for *Paper Moon*. It's the sort of inside info that makes *The Real Oscar* the real book on the subject.

However, there are two recent books which are still available: *The Oscar Directors*, by I. G. Edmunds and Reiko Mimura (The Tantivy Press, £5.95) which takes a welcome oblique look at the subject of awards, via the men who make them possible: the film directors.

This limits us, of course, to Best Picture awards. And, as we all know, no science fiction/horror/fantasy film has ever made it big in that category. So. . . quickly on to *Oscar, A Pictorial History of the Academy Awards* by Thomas Simonet, with the editors of The Associated Press (Columbus Books, £7.95p). This is, as the title suggests, crammed full of the lucky winners grasping the silver statuette to emotionally heaving bosoms. . . But when it comes to Special Effects, there's only one publicity still illustrating 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. Likewise. . . Best Costume Design and Best Makeup (only awarded, anyway, since 1981 - Rick Baker, bless him, being the first recipient for an *American Werewolf in London*). There's a compensatory section on *Disney's Dominance* (which will please Richard Holliss, if no-one else) and the section *Scientific or Technical Awards* shows R2D2 and C3PO collecting their just dues at the 1977 Academy Awards show. All in all, a useful reference, packed with good pix.

Finally, for those who like their reference books to look (and weigh!) like a reference book, there's *Academy Awards*, compiled by Richard Shale. This is an Ungar Reference Index (Second Edition, Enlarged and Updated, distributed by Pipeline Books, at £9.95p). A grand total of 691 pages, described by *Film World* as "the best of the Oscar histories - well-organized and comprehensive, well-indexed year by year and category by category." The ultimate book of lists! The index alone is over fifty pages long! Learn this one off by heart and you can't fail to win *Mastermind*, 1984.

To finish off with. . . How's this still from *The Real Oscar*? This art deco creation was featured as entertainment for an Academy Awards ceremony in the 1930s. A film clip of this what must have been unique production-number-to-end-all-production-numbers was aired on the 1979 Oscar show. By then, sadly, no-one remembered what it was all about. . .

All the books mentioned are currently available from Forbidden Planet II, 58 St Giles High Street, London WC2, at the prices indicated (postage and packing extra).

An interesting batch of questions for this month's *Databank*. Bob Williams of Hampstead writes, "I saw an episode of *Outer Limits* years ago which I can't seem to find mentioned in any listings of the series. As best I can remember it featured a team of scientists stuck in an Arctic research station studying the behaviour of monkeys. Some how it ends up that the monkeys are actually studying the scientists. Why isn't it listed in the *Fantastic Television* book of *Outer Limits* episodes?"

Simple, Bob, it's not an *Outer Limits* episode. I can only assume that you saw this on a black and white telly, for the movie you saw was in colour. Called *A Cold Night's Death*, it was an ABC TV movie written by Christopher Knopf and directed by Jerrold Freedman. I guess the reason you connected it with Joe Stefano's old series was that the leading player was Robert Culp, star of some of the best *OL* shows including *Demon With a Glass Hand* and *The Architects of Fear* and a favourite of yours truly. *A Cold Night's Death* was indeed about a group of scientists, including Eli Wallach, studying the behaviour patterns of apes in isolation. The sting in the tale was that the apes were really studying the homo sapiens under pressure. In many ways the TV movie (first televised in the U.S. in 1973) does contain certain similarities with *OL* although was considerably more subtle than most of that series. Trivia fans might be interested to know that the electronic score featured in the movie was the work of Gil Melle who handled similar chores on the classic Robert Wise SF thriller, *The Andromeda Strain*.

DIMENSIONAL TREK

Lots (and I mean lots) of people have written in to ask whether *Star Trek 3—In Search of Spock* is going to be in 3D. The last word we had on *Trek 3* was that 3D had been dropped as the fad seems to have passed again. A pity, as the ageing *Trek* stars could do with any added dimensions.

NOT THAT HARRISON FORD!

Jerry Lloyd of Eastbourne writes, "Can you tell me anything about the other Harrison Ford, star of silent films?"

Sure can Jerry. Harrison Ford was born in Kansas City, Missouri on March 16, 1892. He made his screen debut in 1916 and was a popular leading man of the period and one of his first features was *The Mysterious Mrs M* in 1917, a thriller about a mysterious fortune-teller whose prophecies of doom start to come true. Just like the "current" Harrison Ford he was a real matinee idol. He retired from the screen in 1932 and died in 1957. Info on the new Harrison will be found in abundance when our illustrious editor publishes his book *The Harrison Ford Story* very soon. (You still don't get a raise! — ed.)

Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary



Top: John Barrymore in the first feature length *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1920). Middle: The Oscar-winning *Federic March* in the 1932 version. Above: Spencer Tracy (left) in the *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* of 1941, but which one is he playing here? Tell us and win a prize! Postcards only please.

PRIZE QUESTION

Despite an obvious pseudonym, Bob Stevenson of Epping gets this month's prize for his question, "Who played *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* first on the screen and how many different versions of the story has there been?"

I don't know who played the Doc first, Bob! But I can tell you that the first film version was probably made by the Selig company in 1908. There was a Danish version the following year which had Alwin Neuss as old fang face. 1912 saw a further American adaptation starring James Cruze who later went on to become one of the leading directors of the silent film. The gloriously named *King Baggot* appeared in it again a year later in a two-reeler running a scant 33 minutes. The same year had another half hour version seeing release by the Kinetograph company, though further credits seem scarce. Then a year later an outfit called *Starlight* released a comedy variation on the story. Hank Mann essayed the role in another comedy in 1920 for *Arrow*. Sheldon Lewis appeared in the part in a 40-minute work-out which had the whole story become a dream in its dreary denouement.

The great John Barrymore gave a spirited performance in the first feature length *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1920. A sumptuous Paramount production, it was directed by John S. Robertson and Clara S. Beranger's script was based not only on T. R. Sullivan's theatrical version but also the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The Barrymore also features the best falling-under-a-table-as-Jekyll-and-popping-up-as-Hyde routines ever committed to film. Five years later a short comedy, more based on the Barrymore interpretation than the original story appeared from Standard.

It's amazing really that such a classically structured story as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (which apparently came to Robert Louis Stevenson in a fevered dream while he was ill) should have inspired so many dull film adaptations. But the best turned up in 1932, directed by Rouben Mamoulian and starring Fredric March as the inquisitive doctor. With Karl Struss' stunning photography, Wally Westmore's neanderthal make-up design and Hans Drier's evocative art direction, the '32 version remains as fresh and exciting today as when it was released. For years the transformation (on-camera) was one of Hollywood's best-kept secrets, but in 1967 the director revealed all. "As you know, a red filter will absorb red and reveal all other colours, and a green filter will do the reverse. Working on that principal, we held graduating coloured filters one by one before the camera, thus allowing successive portions of March's coloured make-up to register on film. It was all rather primitive—the filters were hand-made—but it worked." Fredric March surprised everybody that year by winning the



Anne Francis (far right) pictured here with Leslie Nielsen, Walter Pidgeon and, of course, Robbie the Robot on *Forbidden Planet* (1956).

Oscar for his performance.

Nine years would pass before Hollywood got around to remaking the story. The 1941 MGM version featured Spencer Tracy in a restrained performance which initiated a joke at the time of asking, "Which one is he now, Jekyll or Hyde?" The Victor Fleming directed opus was certainly overlong but was saved from its over-earnestness by the participation of Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner. The former in particular, gave a spirited reading of the tragic prostitute who becomes embroiled with the charismatic Hyde. If you think Tracy is odd casting then consider the actor he replaced – Robert Donat!

There have been many other variations on the tale over the years, including *The Two Faces of Dr Jekyll*, a 1960 Hammer film directed by Terry Fisher and starring Paul Massie. This time 'round the twist (and it needed it) was that Hyde was a suavely handsome charmer and Jekyll was a crusty, old and bearded Victorian doctor. Needless to say, Fisherfiles saw all kinds of comments on repressed Victorian attitudes in this dull film which had the sight of Christopher Lee being strangled by a snake dancer's python as its comic relief.

Lee also played the doctor in the Milton Subotsky produced *I, Monster* in 1971. This plodding and actionless epic was directed by Stephen Weeks and the original intention was that it be shot in a kind of 'flat' 3D. Despite dedicated performances from Lee and Peter Cushing, *I, Monster* barely rates in any department and oddly the character's names were changed to Dr Marlowe and Mr Blake.

There was a pretty good television in the late 60s produced and directed by Dan Curtis and scripted (if memory serves) by Richard Matheson. Jack Palance played the schizoid doctor and despite a long running time and the limitations imposed by television format was pretty good entertainment. It also featured a nose splitting which predates a similar scene in Polanski's *Chinatown*.

But of all the adaptations (and I've only mentioned the major ones and not those where the doctor meets Abbott and Costello, the wolfman or even Tom and Jerry) my own particular favourite is *The Nutty Professor* (Hear! Hear! – ed) with Jerry Lewis. Not only is this the liveliest, but it also contains one of the most disturbing transformations of any *Dr Jekyll* and *Mr Hyde*. It's a com-

edy of course with Jerry playing a klutzy intellectual, unlucky in love. On taking the potion he becomes a sophisticated and obnoxious swinger, idol of the local teenage populace. Lewis directed the piece from a script by himself and Bill Richmond and it also featured a young Stella Stevens. Of all the versions, excluding the Frederic March, this 1963 production stands the test of time the best.

FORBIDDEN HEROINE

Ray Gunn (oh come on, people are going to think we make these up!) of Cheapstow has written requesting info on Anne Francis, the *Forbidden Planet* lady.

Anne was born September 16, 1930 in New York, a little burg named Ossining, to be exact. She went into child modelling at age five and found herself on the covers of a variety of magazines as well as appearing on radio shows. So popular was she in this medium that she was christened "The Little Queen of Soap Opera". Movies followed (natch) and she signed a contract with MGM, making her screen debut in a small part in the 1947 *This Time for Keeps* which starred slippery Esther Williams. The following year she had

another bit part in the romantic and all but forgotten fantasy film, *Portrait of Jennie*. Her roles gradually increased in substance at Metro and in 1956 appeared in the landmark SF movie *Forbidden Planet* playing the naive daughter of Walter Pidgeon who causes such an uproar in the crew of the C57D. She turned up in the superior movies *Bad Day at Black Rock* and *The Blackboard Jungle*, but stardom eluded her. She switched to 20th Century-Fox and while the parts and films may have been marginally better she failed to click with movie-goers as anything more than a pretty face. She alternated her big-screen appearances with television work and experienced a minor and cultish success in 1965 playing a female secret agent, *Honey West* in the series of that name. In more recent years she's turned up in 8 movies such as *More Dead than Alive* (1969), *Lost Flight* (1970) and *Pancho Villa* (1972). She can still be seen occasionally, guesting in TV series such as *Dallas*.

Finally, to all those people who have written asking for an autographed picture of yours truly, I'm sorry but I have to decline for the moment. See you all next month, even if you can't see me!

Keep up with the Joneses!



***And the Dantes, and the Kings,
and the Hills, and the...***

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